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THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

A

TREATISE

ON THE

DIVINITY

OF OUR

LORD JESUS CHRIST;

Written originally in French,

BY JAMES ABBADIE, D. D.
and Dean of Killaloe, in Ireland.

A NEW EDITION of the ENGLISH TRANSLATION,

Revised, Corrected, and, in a few places, Abridged,

BY ABRAHAM BOOTH, A. M.
Paſtor of the Baptiſt Church, Goodman's Fields, London.

Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs, GOD was manifeſt in the fleſh. 1 Timothy iii. 16.
We are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true GOD and Eternal Life. 1 John v. 20.

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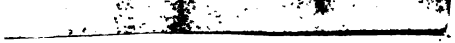

Preface by the Editor.

THE doctrine of our LORD's Eternal Divinity having been, on different grounds, the object of long and violent opposition; many learned, ingenious, and able pens have been engaged in defence of that capital truth. Few, however, have repelled the adversary with those powers of genius, and that force of argument, which were employed by Dr. ABBADIE in composing this admirable Treatise.—Far from contenting himself with dogmatical assertions, and equally far from amusing his readers with curious metaphysical speculations, on the grand Subject of his inquiries; he has recourse to the testimony of GOD—to that Revelation which JEHOVAH has made of himself in the Bible, and to those deductions from it, which are natural, clear, and conclusive. Thus he proves that Christ is a DIVINE PERSON, and equal with the Father; without pretending to know, or attempting to investigate, the MODUS of his Divine Personality. In regard to the *former*, he firmly believes that the Scripture is full, explicit, peremptory; in reference to the *latter*, he considers the sacred Canon as entirely silent: and, to dispute what Eternal Veracity asserts, because it is above the power of reason to comprehend; or to endeavour to discover what God has not revealed of himself, he looks upon as irrational, presumptuous, and highly criminal.

The sentiments and views of our Author, in this respect, are well expressed by another celebrated writer, who says; 'I freely grant, that, had I consulted my 'own reason only, I could not have discovered some 'mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think 'on the grandeur of God; when I cast my eyes on that

'vaſt Ocean; when I conſider that immenſe ALL; 'nothing aſtoniſhes me, nothing ſtumbles me, nothing 'ſeems to me inadmiſſible, how incomprehenſible 'ſoever it may be. When the ſubject is Divine, I 'am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; 'provided I be convinced that it is God his ſelf who 'ſpeaks to me, or any one on his part. After this I am 'no more aſtoniſhed that there are three diſtinct Perſons 'in one Divine eſſence; one God, and yet a Father, a 'Son, and a Holy Ghoſt.—Either religion muſt tell us 'nothing about God, or what it tells us muſt be beyond 'our capacities; and, in diſcovering even the borders 'of this immenſe Ocean, it muſt needs exhibit a vaſt 'extent in which our feeble eyes are loſt. But what 'ſurprizes me, what ſtumbles me, what frightens me, is 'to ſee a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a 'little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble 'organs, controvert a point with the ſupreme Being; 'oppoſe that Intelligence who ſitteth at the helm of the 'world; queſtion what he affirms, diſpute what he 'determines, appeal from his deciſions, and, even after 'God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are 'beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingneſs, mortal 'creature! What madneſs animates thee! How durſt 'thou pretend—thou who art but a point, thou whoſe 'eſſence is but an atom—to meaſure thyſelf with the 'Supreme Being; with him who fills heaven and earth; 'with Him, whom *heaven, the heaven of heavens cannot 'contain! Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt 'thou find out the Almighty to perfection? High as heaven, 'what canſt thou do? deeper than hell, what canſt thou 'know*?'

The great principle which the Author aims to eſtabliſh in the following work is; That the Deity of Jeſus Chriſt is *eſſential* to the Chriſtian Religion. In purſuance of this deſign he ſhews, if Jeſus the Son of God be not of

* M. SAURIN'S *Serm.* Vol. I. p. 78, 79. Mr. ROBINSON'S Tranſlation.

the ſame eſſence with his Father,—That the Mahometan religion is preferable to Chriſtianity, and Chriſt inferior to Mahomet *—That the Sanhedrim did an act of juſtice,

* It may be proper here to obſerve, That ſome of the Socinians have not been aſhamed to avow a conſiderable degree of regard for the character and cauſe of Mahomet. Witneſs their famous Addreſs to AMETH BEN AMETH, ambaſſador from the emperor of Fez and Morocco, to CHARLES the Second, King of Great Britain. 'We, ſay they to his Excellency, as your NEAREST FELLOW-CHAMPIONS for thoſe truths,—[*i. e.* truths in which none but they agree with the Mahometans] We, who, with our Unitarian brethren, were in all ages exerciſed to defend with our pens the faith of one Supreme God, (without perſonalities, or pluralities) *As He hath raiſed your Mahomet to do the ſame* with the ſword, as a ſcourge on thoſe *idolizing Chriſtians*; —We do, *for the vindication of your law-maker's glory*, ſtrive to prove, that ſuch faults and irregularities, [as are found in the Koran] not cohering with the faſhion of the reſt of the Alcoran building, nor with the undoubted ſayings of your prophet, nor with the goſpel of Chriſt (whereof Mahomet would have himſelf to be but *a preacher*)—were foiſted into the ſcattered papers found after Mahomet's death, of which in truth the Alcoran was made up: it being otherwiſe impoſſible that a man of *that* JUDGMENT, *that hath proved itſelf in other things ſo* CONSPICUOUSLY, ſhould be guilty of ſo many and frequent repugnancies, as are to be ſeen in thoſe writings and laws that are now-a-days given out under his name. We do, then, — endeavour to clear by whom, and in what time, ſuch alterations were made in the firſt ſetting out of the Alcoran.' See the whole Addreſs in LESLIE's *Socinian Controverſy Diſc.* Pref. p. 3—13. Thus careful were theſe gentlemen to purge the Koran of every thing ſuppoſititious; and thus tender of its Author's honour!

Another Socinian writer repreſents Mahomet, as having 'no other deſign but to reſtore the belief of the unity of God; which, ſays he, at that time was extirpated among the eaſtern Chriſtians, by the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation.'—And informs us, 'That Mahomet meant not his religion ſhould be eſteemed *a new* religion; but only the reſtitution of the *true intent* of the Chriſtian religion—That the Mahometan learned men call themſelves, *the true diſciples* of the Meſſias, or Chriſt; intimating thereby, that Chriſtians are apoſtates from the MOST ESSENTIAL PARTS of the doctrine of the Meſſias—That Mahometaniſm has prevailed ſo greatly, not by force and

in causing Jesus to be put to death for blasphemy—That He and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error—That there is no agreement between the Old and the New Testament—And, that neither the ancient Jewish, nor the Christian Religion, is attended with sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture. —In proving that these are the necessary consequences of the Socinian and Arian systems, and in answering the principal objections of his opponents; he discovers such fertility of invention, originality of thought, and strength of reasoning powers, as comparatively few enjoy. The generality of writers on this very interesting subject, do little more than collect and retail the thoughts of others, which they express in a different style and method. Not so Dr. ABBADIE. For the reader of this masterly performance, if not possessed of uncommon penetration, is entertained with ideas entirely new, as well as with arguments irrefragably strong, in every Section, and in almost every Chapter: so that, if he love the adorable JESUS and "rejoice in his Highness," he finds himself instructed, amazed, delighted.

Though the book be exceedingly scarce, and, at this time, very little known in England; the abilities of the Writer and the merit of the Treatise have received the most honourable testimonies from various pens. Abbé HOUTEVILLE, for instance, when speaking of our Author's work, on *the truth of the Christian Religion*; of which elaborate performance this is generally reckoned the *third* volume, says; 'The most shining of those 'treatises in defence of the Christian Religion, which 'were published by the Protestants, is that written by 'Mr. ABBADIE. The favourable reception it met with;

'the sword,—but by that one truth, in the Alcoran, the *unity* 'of God;' that is, as well in *Person*, as in *Essence*. And then he represents the Tartars as acting more rationally, in embracing what he calls, 'the *more plausible* sect of Mahomet, than they 'would have done, in receiving the Christian faith of the Trinity, 'Incarnation, &c.' IN LESLIE, as above, p. 28.

'the praiſes it received, almoſt without example, immediately after its publication; and the univerſal approbation it ſtill meets with, render it unneceſſary for me to join my commendations, which would add ſo little to the merit of ſo great an author. In the firſt part he combats the Atheiſts, the Deiſts in the ſecond, and the Socinians in the third *.'—VOLTAIRE alſo, who cannot be ſuſpected of a predilection for ABBADIE, on account of his writing in defence of revealed truth; informs us, that 'he was celebrated for his Treatiſe on the Chriſtian Religion †.'—And the Rev. Mr. VENN thus recommends the work; 'It is a book in the higheſt form for reputation, in all the Proteſtant countries abroad; a book, in which the horrid abſurdities of all, who, under pretence of being *more rational* in religion, reject the counſel of God, are expoſed in a moſt maſterly manner ‡.'—Such is the character of the Author, among thoſe who know his abilities; and ſuch the eſteem which this performance of his has obtained.

The ſtyle of the Engliſh tranſlation, which, on account of its many inaccuracies, repreſented the work to great diſadvantage, the Editor has attempted to correct; and, where it did not affect the argument, he has abridged the book, that the ſize and price of it might be reduced. He has alſo taken the liberty, in ſome places, of throwing in an additional thought; with a view, either to elucidate the Author's meaning, or to enforce his argument.—How far his endeavours to render the book more generally known, and the tranſlation of it more agreeable, may obtain the approbation of the religious public, he cannot pretend to ſay. He is not, however, without a pleaſing perſuaſion, that many will read the work with delight and profit—that many, who "love our LORD

* Article ABBADIE, *New and Gen. Biograph. Dict.* Note.

† Age of LEWIS XIV. Vol. II. p. 274.

‡ *Exam. of Dr. Prieſtley's Addreſs on the Lord's Supper*, p. 22, 23. Note.

"JESUS CHRIST in sincerity," will rejoice to see his Divine Dignity so well defended, against the insinuating artifices of pernicious error, and the bold attacks of open blasphemy. And it is his ardent prayer that GOD OUR SAVIOUR, to whom the Author dedicates the work *, would condescend to use it as a mean of his own glory, and of the church's good. To Him, therefore, "WHO "IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER," it is once more commended.

* See the paragraph which concludes the work.

Goodman's Fields,
January 1, 1777.

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THE

DEITY of JESUS CHRIST

Essential to the

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE capital truths of religion are ſo cloſely connected, that, like the principles of geometry, ſome of them ſerve, as ſo many ſteps, by which to deſcend to the knowledge of others.

In our examination of the principal evidences on which our faith is eſtabliſhed, we were led by the truth of the exiſtence of God, to that of natural religion; by the truth of natural religion, to that of the Jewiſh religion; and by the truth of the Jewiſh religion, to that of the Chriſtian religion *.

The mutual relation which theſe grand truths have one to another, has led us a ſtep further. We could not carefully examine the foundations of the Chriſtian religion, without being convinced, that the ſame principles eſtabliſh the DIVINITY of Jeſus Chriſt—Eſtabliſh it in ſuch a manner, that he who doubts, whether the Lord

* Referring to the Author's Treatiſe *On the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion.*

Meſſiah be truly and properly GOD, ought alſo to queſtion the truth of the Scriptures, which contain the Chriſtian doctrine; and, that whoever is aſſured the New Teſtament is divinely authentic, ought not to diſpute the Deity of Chriſt. This is the general deſign of the enſuing Treatiſe.

But, for the better underſtanding it, one diſtinction is highly neceſſary. The Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt may be conſidered, either as a myſtery *concealed* from us; or as a truth *revealed* to us. That our Lord is really a Divine Perſon, is a truth revealed; but the modus of his Divine Subſiſtence, is an unſearchable myſtery; and, ſo far from attempting to explain it, we ought rather to ſhew, that it is inexplicable. All the difference between the people and their teachers, in this reſpect, is, The ignorance of the people is modeſt and humble; they are not aſhamed to own it. But that of their teachers is haughty, and has recourſe to ſcholaſtic diſtinctions, in order to conceal itſelf. We do not, therefore, undertake to *explain* the myſtery, but to *prove the fact*. We ſhall have no recourſe to metaphyſical ſpeculations, to ſhew HOW the thing is; but we ſhall make it appear, from divine Revelation, that it REALLY IS.

As my general deſign is to prove, that there is a neceſſary connection between the Divinity of Chriſt, and the truth of the Chriſtian religion, I ſhall make it my principal endeavour to ſhew, that they muſt ſtand, or fall, together. For this purpoſe, I ſhall adopt a method which may ſeem a little new and extraordinary; but ſuch as may, perhaps, be convincing. If Jeſus Chriſt be not the true God, of the ſame eſſence with his Father, I ſhall ſhew, That the Mahometan religion is preferable to Chriſtianity, and Chriſt inferior to Mahomet—That the Sanhedrim did an act of juſtice in cauſing Jeſus to be put to death for blaſphemy—That He and his apoſtles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error—

That there is no harmony between the Old and the New Teſtament—And, that neither the ancient Jewiſh, nor the Chriſtian religion, is attended with ſufficient criteria to diſtinguiſh it from impoſture. Which particulars I ſhall diſtinctly conſider, in five Sections: to which I ſhall add a ſixth, deſigned to anſwer the principal objections againſt the orthodox faith.

As the DIVINITY of Chriſt, the INCARNATION, and the TRINITY, are three ſubjects which may be diſtinctly handled; it is proper to appriſe the reader, that it is the *firſt* only which I intend here to eſtabliſh; it being, in ſome reſpects, fundamental to the other two.

The brevity at which I aim not permitting me to rank the adverſaries of the orthodox doctrine in different claſſes, and to engage the Arians, Semi-arians, and Socinians, ſeparately; I have ſo managed the argument, that they are generally oppoſed by the ſame proofs.

I diſtinguiſh, once for all, and requeſt the reader carefully to remember it, between the *perſons* of our adverſaries, and the *cauſe* which they plead. Towards the *former* I have all the ſentiments of love and compaſſion, which are due to my erring fellow-mortals. I admire the parts, the learning, and the gifts, which God has beſtowed on ſome of them. And though they do manifeſt violence to the Scripture, I would not accuſe them of ſpeaking contrary to their own light; nor judge them unworthy of toleration in a Proteſtant ſtate.—As to their *cauſe*, I ought not to be cenſured, if I endeavour to repreſent it in its own colours—in all that deformity which neceſſarily attends an hypotheſis, that is contrary to Divine Revelation and the ſpirit of true religion. This is my duty, and one end of my miniſtry. I ought not to omit any thing, which appears to be a lawful and propable mean of convincing them

that oppoſe the truth, and of reclaiming thoſe who have wandered from the path of duty. But it is far from being my deſign to uſe hyperbolical expreſſions and declamatory language, in order to give an hideous deſcription of a diſguiſed doctrine. My intention is, to adduce ſuch arguments from the Scripture as are pertinent and concluſive, and to propoſe them in a plain manner; having recourſe to the Divine teſtimony and right reaſon, for the eſtabliſhment of truth and the confutation of error.—May the WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR enlighten the mind and guide the pen of the writer! that this work may redound to the glory of GOD MY SAVIOUR and prove a bleſſing to all its readers. Amen.

SECTION I.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true GOD, of the ſame eſſence with his Father, the Mahometan religion is preferable to the Chriſtian religion, and JESUS CHRIST inferior to Mahomet.

CHAPTER I.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, the Chriſtianity we profeſs is a corruption of the Chriſtian religion, and Mahometaniſm the re-eſtabliſhment of it.

THAT there is an infinite diſtance between the Creator and the creature, is a principle of natural religion. God cannot, therefore, without the moſt hateful impiety, be treated as a creature; nor can a creature, without damnable idolatry, be treated as a God. If, then, Jeſus Chriſt be the Creator, he cannot be ſaid, without impiety, to be a mere creature: and, if he be a mere creature, he cannot, without idolatry, be acknowledged as God. Conſequently, if we who conſider him, as of one eſſence with the Father, and the eternal God, be under a miſtake, we cannot be cleared from a charge of idolatry, ſince it is as ſuch that we worſhip him.

We could not juſtify our conduct, by ſaying; 'we 'ſincerely believe him to be God; ſo that though 'there is an error in our judgment, yet there is no 'infidelity in our hearts, our worſhip being directed to

'God only.' For the ſame reaſon might ſerve to excuſe all idolaters paſt, preſent, and future. The Heathens, who worſhipped their Jupiter, really believed him to be God, and their acts of worſhip were intentionally referred to the Supreme Being; yet they were not the leſs idolatrous on that account.

Nor ought we to imagine that a creature, on account of its ſuperior excellence, may become the object of worſhip, which it would not be lawful to give to one of an inferior order. For they who worſhip the ſtars, are as really idolaters, as thoſe that worſhip wood and ſtone; and they who worſhip angels, as thoſe that worſhip the ſtars: becauſe idolatry does not conſiſt, in rendering divine honours to a creature that is *comparatively low* in the ſcale of dependant exiſtence; but in addreſſing them to *a mere creature.*

Here it will be ſaid, 'It may be lawful to worſhip 'a creature, whom God is pleaſed to inveſt with his 'glory; as it is lawful to pay extraordinary honours to 'a ſubject, to whom the king orders they ſhould be 'paid.'—But then it muſt be granted, that it is never lawful to worſhip a creature, as the true God; any more than it is to honour a ſubject, by treating him as the real ſovereign. I may venture to aſſert, that God neither would, nor could part with this character of his glory, in favour of another. He *could* not: For it is impoſſible that he only ſhould be the true God, and that another, who has not his eſſence, ſhould be ſo too. He *would* not: For how could he will a thing, which, being contrary to the truth, is contrary to his nature?—Suppoſe, then, that Chriſt is God's repreſentative, and that it is as ſuch he is an object of worſhip; yet, not being God, he cannot, without manifeſt idolatry, be worſhipped *as* God.

Again: Idolatry is a crime which violates the law of God and deſtroys the ſpirit of piety: it is directly oppoſite to the two great ends of religion; which are, the glory of God, and the ſalvation of our ſouls. As

to the *former*, it evidently robs JEHOVAH of his glory, and invests a creature with it. As to the *latter*, the spirit of infallibility has declared, that "idolaters shall "not inherit the kingdom of God."

Hence it follows, that the Christianity we profess, is a corruption of the Christian religion; and that Mahometanism is the re establishment of it. For if Christianity in its primitive purity, represent and treat Jesus Christ as a mere creature; we corrupt and subvert it, when we consider and worship him, as the true God. If, then the religion of those who worship him as the Supreme Being, be a corruption of Christianity; the Mahometan religion, which represents God as infinitely superior to Jesus Christ, must be, in this respect, the re-establishment of it.

We have been told, indeed, by Episcopius, 'That 'the Christian religion is not a science of bare contem-'plation, but a practical knowledge; and, that it consists 'in obedience, rather than in any abstracted speculations 'on the Deity.' I grant the principle, but deny that it is pertinently applied in the case before us. What, are those sentiments *mere speculations*, which are of such importance, that we are guilty of idolatry, if they be false, and our adversaries of blasphemy, if they be true?

If our Lord be of the same essence with his Father; or, in other words, if he be God by nature; he ought to be adored as such: and our opponents cannot, without the greatest impiety, refuse to acknowledge and worship him under that most exalted character. But if he be not of one essence with the Father, we cannot consider and address him as the true God, without being guilty of idolatry. So that the great question here is, How may we avoid impiety, on the one hand; and idolatry on the other? consequently, it is practical and of the highest importance.

The learned Arminian just mentioned, labours much, therefore, to little purpose, when he endeavours to prove, 'That it is not essential to salvation to know, whether

'Jesus Christ be a divine person, by eternal generation; 'or whether, being a mere creature, he be called God, 'on account of his ministry.' For, to prove that the knowledge of these things is not essential, he must not only shew, that the Socinians may, without being idolaters, worship one whom they *believe* to be a mere man, by nature; but also, that we, without the guilt of idolatry, may adore Jesus Christ AS GOD, though he be not so in reality. If our belief of the eternal generation and consubstantiality of the Son of God, betray us into idolatry; nothing can be more fundamental, or more necessary, than a knowledge of those questions which respect his generation and consubstantiality. But it is certain, that our doctrine, upon this subject, does lead us into idolatry, if we be in an error, as to the doctrine itself. For if Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, he is not God: and if so, we cannot place him on the throne of God, by paying divine honours to him without manifest idolatry.

Nor have we any excuse, by which to extenuate the impiety of our conduct. For, were we to say, 'That 'we worship him as the Supreme Being, because we 'verily believe him to be so;' the Heathens, as before observed, might, on the same principle, justify the worship which they addressed to Jupiter.—Were we to plead, 'We are not to be blamed for worshipping him 'as God, because, though he be not so, he deserves 'our adoration;' we should only change the state of the question. For the question here, is not, whether he deserves adoration: but, whether we may adore him AS GOD, though he be not God.—Were we to assert, 'That nothing is absolutely necessary to be believed, 'performed, or avoided, in order to our salvation, but 'what is most evidently commanded, or prohibited in 'the Scripture;' it would only serve to condemn us. For what is more expressly contained in the Bible, than those precepts which require, that we should ascribe the glory of God to none but God? Or, what

is prohibited on more dreadful pains than idolatry, which puts the creature in the place of God?—Were we to imagine, 'That God would not condemn our 'worſhip, becauſe he aſſumes to himſelf all the honours 'that are paid to his Son;' a little reflection would convince us of a great miſtake. For if Chriſt be a mere creature, he cannot be called the Son of God, but in an improper and very remote ſenſe. Conſequently, however highly exalted he may be above other creatures, yet the diſproportion between him and God is greater, immenſely greater, than that which ſubſiſts between Gabriel and a worm. If, then, a very excellent creature would take it deſervedly ill, to have the honours which are due to himſelf transferred to one that is mean and vile; with much greater reaſon will God be offended, that the worſhip which is due to himſelf only, is addreſſed to Jeſus Chriſt.

But it is ſaid, 'JESUS CHRIST repreſents GOD.' True: It is, however, certain, that to *repreſent* God, is one thing; to *be* God, is another.—'But he is the Son of God.' Granted: Notwithſtanding, on the Socinian principles, he bears that character only in a figurative ſenſe; conſequently, there is a greater diſtance between him and God, than there is between the meaneſt inſect and the moſt glorious angel. So that though it were proper to inveſt the vileſt creature, with the titles and glories of the moſt exalted; it would not be lawful to pay to Jeſus Chriſt thoſe honours which are due to none but God.

CHAPTER II.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father Mahomet was a teacher raised up of God to instruct mankind.

IT appears, then, that the Mahometan religion is, in some respects, the re-establishment of Christianity, if Christ be not the true God. But I shall here be told, 'That the religion of the Arabian prophet, is 'replete with fiction and imposture.' Granted: Yet I beg leave to inquire, How it came to pass that truth and error made so strict an alliance in it? That Mahomet was an impostor, is acknowledged: that he abolished idolatry, must also be allowed; and thus two opposite characters are united in him. If he turned a great part of the world from Christian idolatry;—for so I call that worship which Christians pay to Jesus Christ, if he be not God;—by what spirit performed he so great a work? by the Spirit of God, or the spirit of the devil? If by the *latter*, how came he to abolish idolatry? If by the *former*, how could he be an impostor?

It may be objected, 'Mahomet condemned the 'worship of the Pagan idols, and so the dilemma may 'be retorted.' But there is a difference between the principles which he supposed, and those which he established. The knowledge of the true God had been introduced among the Heathen, and Pagan idolatry was destroyed, before he appeared in the world. It was not Mahomet, but JESUS CHRIST, by the preaching of his apostles, who produced these great effects: and Mahomet, by what spirit soever he is supposed to have been inspired, neither durst have attempted to introduce, nor could have established, a religion in the world, contrary to them.

But the caſe is not the ſame, in regard to the true knowledge of Chriſt and the deſtruction of Chriſtian idolatry. It was Mahomet who taught mankind, that Chriſtians, in worſhipping Jeſus Chriſt as God, were guilty of idolatry. It was his chief deſign to rectify the miſtakes of thoſe, who, as he thought, worſhipped ſeveral gods under the name of a TRINITY; for ſo he ſpeaks in his Koran. As, therefore, Chriſt and his apoſtles were the reformers of the Heathen world, by deſtroying Pagan idolatry; ſo Mahomet ought to have the honour of reforming the Chriſtian world, if it be true that he really deſtroyed the Chriſtian idolatry.—But, as we ſhould have had abundant cauſe of aſtoniſhment, if the apoſtles had deſtroyed the Pagan idolatry and converted the Heathen world, by preaching fables; ſo we ſhould have equal reaſon to be ſurpriſed, if Mahomet aboliſhed the Chriſtian idolatry by impoſture.

Beſides, Jeſus Chriſt declares, that teachers are "known by their fruits." This maxim muſt be true, becauſe it was ſpoken by truth itſelf. If, then, we apply this principle to the caſe before us, we cannot but conceive an high opinion of Mahomet, and acknowledge him to have been a great prophet. It is no more than juſtice to his character, if he was the perſon who taught mankind the iniquity and the danger of confounding God with a creature. For he has enlightened many nations and many ages. Like a wiſe and ſincere worſhipper of his Maker, and the friend of mankind, he has placed God on the throne of God, and the creature in the rank of a creature. What more lawful, what more holy, than ſuch a deſign? What could be nobler, what greater, than ſuch a work? If Mahomet have indeed enlightened the world, by aſſerting the rights of the Deity, and overturning the Chriſtian idolatry, he deſerves thoſe titles of honour which the Muſſulmen give him; and we may boldly affirm, that he ought to be conſidered, as a teacher of truth and a prophet of God—a prophet, greater than any that were

under the law, greater than Jesus Christ. These are strange and shocking paradoxes, yet certain and unavoidable truths, if Christ be not the true God.

I said, he is a *teacher of truth*. This cannot be denied, while he teaches mankind such essential truths. This first principle of sacred truth, *A mere creature ought not to be worshipped as* GOD; is the foundation of natural religion, as distinguished from superstition—of the Jewish religion, as opposed to Pagan idolatry—and of the Christian religion, considered in its purity. Mahomet, then, who established his religion on this grand principle, is a teacher of truth, of divine truth; even of that truth which, of all others, is most important and essential to religion.

'But Mahomet aims at the gratification of sordid passions, and is rather a teacher of the flesh than of the spirit.' If so, we have reason to wonder that so much truth is attended with so much impurity and vice; for light and darkness have no communion. If, then, he did not act by the Spirit of God, it must have been by the spirit of the world; and if by the *latter*, then not by the *former*. We must, therefore, inquire after the characters of these two spirits in him.—We are told, that 'He is impure in his maxims and morals.' This is a character of the spirit of the world; but the fact must be admitted with some restriction. For Mahomet reformed religion, by overturning the Christian idolatry and causing God only to be worshipped, through a great part of the world. This is, undoubtedly, a character of the Spirit of God, and a strong presumption in his favour. For how should an impostor promote the good-pleasure and the honour of God, by enlightening mankind and destroying idolatry? What, has God invested an impostor with the highest character of his own prophets, and with that of his own Son! For the prophets, who predicted the coming of the Messiah, foretold also, as a character of his appearance, that he should destroy idolatry. What, has the most Holy made an impostor the

inſtrument of his mercy and the miniſter of his glory! What ſhould we have thought of the divine conduct, if God had choſen devils incarnate to be his meſſengers to mankind and preachers of his goſpel? We ſhould certainly have concluded, either that he intended to render the goſpel deteſtable, by putting it into the mouths of devils; or, that he deſigned to conſecrate thoſe apoſtate ſpirits, by making them the depoſitaries of his truth, and miniſters of his grace *. This compariſon is the fitter, for its being odious, to illuſtrate the point. For what we ſay of the devil, may be ſaid of ſeducers, his miniſters, in general, and of Mahomet, in a particular manner. That is, if he, being an impoſtor, was choſen of God to re-eſtabliſh the true religion, by deſtroying the Chriſtian idolatry; Providence muſt have deſigned, either to render religion infamous, or to conſecrate the impoſtor by chooſing and employing him in a work ſo great, ſo glorious, ſo divine: both which ſuppoſitions are impious and abominable.

* The Evangelical hiſtory and the Acts of the apoſtles inform us, it muſt be acknowledged, of atteſtations that were given to the dignity of our Lord's perſon and the truth of his goſpel, by infernal ſpirits. But there is a great and manifeſt difference, between thoſe occaſional, tranſient, and rejected teſtimonies; and the caſe which is here ſuppoſed. See *Mark* i. 23, 24, 25. *Luke* iv. 33, 34, 35. *Acts* xvi. 17, 18.

CHAPTER III.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was a great prophet, the greatest of prophets, and preferable to JESUS CHRIST.

MAHOMET, on the principles of our opponents, was a great prophet, and superior to any of the prophets under the Old Testament. This will appear, if the following things be considered. The ancient prophets spake only to the people of Israel; but Mahomet to the finest and most considerable part of the world. Of them there was a long succession, yet not effectual to preserve a single nation from idolatry; but he had no need of a companion, or successor, to banish idolatry for ever, from those countries where his doctrine has been received. They were raised up in an extraordinary manner, and wrought various miracles, in order to destroy idolatry; but he delivered a great part of the world from the Christian idolatry, without the assistance of one miracle. Moses, though the greatest of the ancient prophets, did not know God as he is; Jesus Christ, and he only, knew him perfectly and made him known to men. But if the doctrine of our adversaries be true, Mahomet has made him known much better than Jesus Christ: which leads us to shew, that the *former*, according to their hypothesis, ought to be considered as a greater prophet than the *latter*.

This appears from his doctrine, and the success of his ministry. As to the *success of his ministry*, the thing speaks for itself. Jesus, indeed, caused his gospel to be preached and received throughout the world, but then he has hardly destroyed one kind of idolatry, before his followers lapse into another: for they are no sooner delivered from Pagan, than they fall into Christian

idolatry. But Mahomet eſtabliſhed his religion on firmer foundations. He took wiſer and juſter meaſures, to preſerve his diſciples from relapſing into idolatry, in future; nor have they ever diſcovered an inclination ſo to do. The diſadvantage of Jeſus Chriſt, upon the compariſon, ariſes from this: The doctrine of Mahomet has in it a natural character, which is more oppoſite to idolatry, than the doctrine of Chriſt. The reader, in order to be convinced of this, need only to conſider the language of Jeſus, in the writings of the New Teſtament, and compare it with the language of Mahomet, in his Koran.

Jeſus tells us in his New Teſtament, "That he was "before John the Baptiſt, and before Abraham—"That he had a glory with his Father, before the world "was created—That he was in the beginning; that he "was with God, and was GOD—That all things were "created by him, whether they be viſible or inviſible—"That all things were not only created by him, but "for him; and that by him all things conſiſt—That he "laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens "are the works of his hands—That he is the Alpha and "Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Firſt and "the Laſt—And, that there is one LORD, Jeſus Chriſt, "by whom are all things, and we by him."—In the ſame ſacred rule of our faith and practice, he is called, "The Son of God—his own Son—and his only "begotten Son." He is further called, "The LORD "—LORD and GOD—GOD with us—GOD manifeſt in "the fleſh—The TRUE GOD—The GREAT GOD and "SAVIOUR."

And, that we might not be at a loſs for the ſenſe, in which theſe names and characters are given to him, we find him applying to himſelf many oracles of the prophets, which undoubtedly ſpeak of the true God, and contain the characters of his peculiar glory.—Solomon, for inſtance, addreſſing himſelf to the God of Iſrael, at the dedication of the temple, ſaid; "Thou,

"even thou only, knoweſt the hearts of the children of "men." Jeſus claims this Divine prerogative, in the moſt ſolemn manner, as that which ſhall engage the fear and wonder of all his diſciples. "All the churches "ſhall know that I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE "REINS AND HEARTS; and I will give unto every one "of you according to your works."—It is written in the law, according to the expoſition of Jeſus Chriſt; "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only "ſhalt thou ſerve." Yet an infallible writer aſſures us, that when God brought his Firſt-begotten into the world he ſaid, "Let all the angels of God WORSHIP HIM."—Concerning JEHOVAH the pſalmiſt ſings; "Of old "haſt thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the "heavens are the work of thy hands. They ſhall "periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; thou art the ſame, "and thy years ſhall have no end." That theſe things are aſſerted of God none can doubt; and that they are applicable to none but Him, is, I ſhould think, equally evident. Yet it is paſt denial that this text is expreſsly applied to Jeſus Chriſt. "Unto the Son he ſaith, Thy "throne, O God, is for ever and ever—And, thou "LORD, in the beginning, haſt laid the foundation of "the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine "hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt—thou "art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail."—It is of JEHOVAH thoſe words were ſpoken; "The chariots "of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of angels. "The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy "place. Thou haſt aſcended on high; thou haſt "led captivity captive; thou haſt received gifts for men." God only has legions of angels under his command and at his diſpoſal. God only can diſpenſe heavenly donatives to rebellious men. And yet Jeſus Chriſt, by the pen of his apoſtle, applies this paſſage to himſelf, in the moſt direct manner. "Wherefore he ſaith, When he "aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and "gave gifts unto men. Now that he aſcended, what

" is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower " parts of the earth?"—Once more: It is God, the infinite, eternal JEHOVAH, who ſpeaks in the following ſublime paſſage; " I have ſworn by myſelf, the word " is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall " not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every " tongue ſhall ſwear." This text alſo is applied to Jeſus Chriſt, by his faithful ſervant Paul. " We ſhall " all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. For it " is written, As I live ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall " bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God."—Quotations of a ſimilar kind, might be eaſily multiplied; but theſe may ſuffice to ſhew, how Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf, and taught his apoſtles to ſpeak of him. I ſhall now proceed to ſhew, in the following Chapter, how Mahomet ſpeaks of himſelf, and how carefully he guards againſt idolatry.

CHAPTER IV.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, Mahomet was more true, more wiſe, more concerned for the good of mankind, and more zealous for the glory of God, than he.

WE have ſeen that Jeſus Chriſt equals himſelf with God, by ſaying of himſelf ſuch things, and applying to himſelf ſuch oracles, as cannot belong to any but the Supreme Being.—Thus did not Mahomet. For he declares, in almoſt every page of his Koran, that none but the eternal Father is God. He indeed, calls himſelf a prophet, a man divinely ſent; but he lays no claim to Divinity. He acknowledges that Jeſus Chriſt had a divine miſſion; but will not allow him to be called

GOD, nor the SON OF GOD. There is not the leaſt ambiguity in his language, on this important ſubject. He plainly aſſerts, that they who ſay, 'The Son of Mary is God, are infidels.' And avers, 'That Chriſt, the Son of Mary, is no more than God's envoy.' That the 'Chriſtians are infidels, by making *three* gods, 'when there is but *one*.' Nay, he thus repreſents God as complaining to Jeſus Chriſt; 'O, Jeſus, Son of Mary, 'doſt thou perſuade mankind to put thy Mother and 'Thee in the place of God, and to worſhip you, as if 'ye were Gods?' To which he repreſents Jeſus as anſwering; 'God forbid, that I ſhould ſay any thing 'contrary to the truth! Thou knoweſt whether I have 'taught that doctrine, or no. Thou knoweſt the ſecrets 'of all hearts.'—He requires that men ſhould 'worſhip God, the Creator of heaven and earth; who 'made the light and the darkneſs.' And he calls thoſe 'infidels, who ſet up Chriſt, as equal to God.'

Hence it appears, on the principles of our adverſaries, that Mahomet was more *true*, more *wiſe*, more *concerned for the good of mankind*, and more *zealous for the glory of God*, than Jeſus Chriſt. This concluſion we abhor, as full of blaſphemy; and yet we cannot but conſider it as unavoidable, if the ſentiments we oppoſe be true.

If Chriſt be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, Mahomet was more *true* than he; at leaſt, in thoſe things which regard the fundamentals of religion and the glory of God. This will appear if you recollect the manner in which our Lord ſpeaks of himſelf, and how, by the direction of his own Spirit, his apoſtles repreſent him, in the Scripture-teſtimonies adduced in the preceding chapter; and compare them with the declarations of Mahomet, which are directly contrary, as is manifeſt from the quotations juſt now produced from his Koran. In the *former*, Jeſus is deſcribed as bearing divine characters and poſſeſſing divine perfections; as performing divine works and as being the true God; but in the *latter*, as a mere creature, and infinitely inferior to Jehovah.

The language of the Bible, therefore, and the language of the Koran, cannot be both true, becauſe they are contradictory. But that of the Koran, which expreſsly aſſerts that Chriſt is a mere creature, and ought not to be conſidered as the Supreme Being, is not falſe, if he be indeed a mere creature. The inference, then, is plain and unavoidable, though ſhocking and horrid; it is the language of the Bible, the language of Jeſus Chriſt, that is void of truth.

It will be ſaid; 'The expreſſions of Mahomet are 'proper and *literal*, but thoſe of Chriſt figurative and 'hyperbolical; ſo that, though contrary in appearance, 'yet not in reality.' But what proof is there, that the language of Chriſt is figurative? Beſides, it is unlawful, it is highly criminal, to make uſe of ſuch figures as are injurious to the glory of God. We could not, without profaneneſs, ſay; Such a man is equal to God, in wiſdom and power, in greatneſs and grandeur. And it would be but a poor apology for the uſe of ſuch expreſſions, were we to endeavour to defend them by ſaying; They were applied, and are to be underſtood, in a hyperbolical, and not a literal ſenſe. For we ſhould ſoon be told, that ſome figures are impious; and that ſuch hyperboles as equal the creature with the Creator, are to be deteſted, as abſolutely unlawful.—If in the ſtyle of the world, mortal beauties be called *adorable;* if they be ſpoken of as ſo many *divinities;* the language, though figurative, is manifeſtly profane; though nobody can be ſo far deceived by it, as to miſtake a beautiful woman for a divinity. For if theſe figures, either directly, or indirectly, imply a want of reverence for God, it is enough to denominate them impious. If, then, in human language, we ought not to ſuffer ſuch figures as indicate a want of reſpect for the Deity; much leſs ought ſuch expreſſions to be uſed in a language ſacred and divine, as is that of the Bible. And if ſuch hyperboles be inſufferable, when doing honour to mortal beauties, whom we cannot poſſibly miſtake for the true

God; how much more dangerous and iniquitous would they be, when uſed concerning a ſubject who might, as the event has ſhewn, in reſpect of Chriſt, be eaſily taken for the Supreme Being!

Again: If Jeſus Chriſt be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, Mahomet was much *wiſer* than he. As wiſdom conſiſts in chooſing the beſt means for obtaining a propoſed end; we need only examine, What was the *end* of each, in eſtabliſhing his religion; and then inquire, What *method* the one and the other took, to ſucceed in their deſigns.—Mahomet's deſign was, as he declares, to make known the true God, as exalted far above all creatures—to make him known, as the only object of religious worſhip; who ought to be diſtinguiſhed from all other beings, even from Chriſt himſelf: maintaining, that Jeſus is far from partaking with his Father in the glories of the Deity. Of theſe things Mahomet endeavours to perſuade mankind. And for this purpoſe he makes uſe of plain, and ſtrong, and proper expreſſions. He loudly and vehemently declares, that they who treat Jeſus Chriſt as God, are idolaters; which is the direct way to accompliſh his deſign.—It is ſuppoſed alſo, that the great end of Jeſus Chriſt is to glorify God. To *glorify God*, is, according to the language of inſpiration, to exalt him far above all other beings. The ancient prophets foretelling that God ſhould be glorified, in an extraordinary manner, in the latter times, expreſs their ideas in the following words; "The loſty looks of men ſhall be humbled, and the "haughtineſs of man ſhall be bowed down, and the "LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED in that day." But Chriſt debaſes God, at the very time he profeſſes to exalt him; for, by his expreſſions, he puts himſelf in the place of God. This he does, when he calls himſelf God; when he claims divine perfections; when he attributes to himſelf the work of creation; and when he applies to himſelf thoſe oracles of the prophets which diſplay the eſſential characters of the Supreme Being.

If it be said, 'It is sufficient that Christ declares, *his 'Father is greater than he:*' I answer, It would be a haughty kind of modesty for a mere creature to say, The Former of all things is greater than I. Neither Moses nor Isaiah, nor any of the prophets, ever used such language. A loyal subject never affects to say, The king is greater than I. That is taken for granted. Nor will a holy creature make use of such language, concerning his Creator; because it would be, in some sense, to compare himself with the infinite God.—Besides, what would it avail for Jesus, *once* in the course of his converse on earth, to say, "My Father is greater "than I;" when in the general tenour of his conduct and language, and in the language he taught his disciples, he speaks and acts as if he were the true God?

It may, perhaps, be replied, 'Here you beg the 'question: for those expressions, from which your 'conclusion is drawn, require a very different interpre-'tation.' When, for instance, Jesus is called God, our adversaries will have the name to signify, that he was sent from God and represents God. When he is said to have "made the worlds;" the meaning is, that he made the happiness of the age to come, or the kingdom of the Messiah, which was so eagerly expected by the ancient Jews. When it is said, "He was in "the beginning," and "all things were made by "him;" the expressions mean, that he was from the time of John the Baptist, is the author of the gospel, and of all that is done under that dispensation. When he is called, "God manifest in the flesh;" the character signifies a creature that represents God. And when it is said, that "he laid the foundation of the earth, and "the heavens are the works of his hands;" the expressions are used and the works ascribed to him, by way of accomodation, and not in a literal and proper sense.—A small share of common sense is quite sufficient to shew how unnatural and violent these interpretations are. But, supposing they were to the purpose, it could not

be denied, that these expressions of Scripture, if they must be taken according to these explanations, are very obscure and equivocal. It could not, I say, be denied; since the far greater part of the Christian world has been ignorant of their meaning for so many ages; and since the first impression they naturally form on our minds, suggests the propriety of a very different interpretation. This evinces, if I may say it without blasphemy, that Christ was not so *prudent* in the choice of his language as Mahomet. For that pretended prophet always speaks in a clear, strong, peremptory manner, in order to shew, that it is not lawful, on any consideration, to represent a creature as possessed of the characters and properties of God. Whereas Christ and his apostles have used many expressions that are obscure and equivocal; such as, in their most common acceptation, seem to invest a creature, a mere man, with the glories of the Deity: we being obliged to understand the terms of which a discourse consists, in their common and natural signification, and not in one that is uncommon and forced. Consequently the language of Mahomet is more proper to glorify God, than the language of Christ; and, therefore, if the design of the *latter* was to honour and exalt God, he has not succeeded in it so well as the *former*.

Further: If the sentiments of our adversaries be true, Mahomet was more *concerned for the good of mankind* than Jesus Christ. This appears from hence. A prudent and diligent endeavour to preserve men from idolatry, is one of the greatest marks of a sincere regard to their happiness; because idolatry destroys their souls, by excluding them from the kingdom of heaven. If, then, Jesus Christ be not a divine person, of the same essence with his Father, he has not taken proper measures to preserve men from the dreadful evil of idolatry, while Mahomet has done it effectually: for he has abolished the Christian idolatry in a great part of the world, and laid such foundations of his own religion, that a man cannot be guilty of idolatry, without first ceasing to be

his diſciple. But as for Chriſt, he has given occaſion to it; he has laid a foundation for it. For he does not only permit and direct his diſciples to give him the titles of the Supreme Being; but alſo to aſcribe to him the perfections and works of the Deity, and to apply to him many of the ſublimeſt oracles of the Old Teſtament, which relate to the God of Iſrael.

It was, for inſtance, a very ſurpriſing thing, that Jeſus, when he appeared to Thomas, after his reſurrection, ſhould ſuffer him to cry out, "MY LORD, AND MY GOD!" without ſaying a word to him about the impiety and blaſphemy of an exclamation, which treats the creature as if he were the Creator. Thomas, before, was an unbeliever; now he is an idolater. Till that inſtant, he would not believe that Jeſus was riſen; he conſidered him as a man lying under the power of death; but now, on a ſudden, he addreſſes him as God; he bows and adores. Of the two extremes, the latter is moſt condemnable; for unbelief is not ſo criminal as idolatry. *That* diſhonouring Jeſus Chriſt; *this* uſurping the throne of God. Better for Thomas, therefore, to have perſiſted in this unbelief, than, by renouncing it, to fall into idolatry. And yet—ſtrange indeed! ſtrange to aſtoniſhment! who can account for it? Jeſus upbraids him only with the *former*; not at all with the *latter*.—Beſides, as our Lord could not but know what an impreſſion theſe words of his amazed and adoring apoſtle would make on the minds of men; as he knew that the Jews, deceived by expreſſions leſs exceptionable than theſe, had accuſed him of blaſphemy; and as he knew that theſe very expreſſions would give occaſion to Chriſtians in ſucceeding ages, to treat him as the true God; it is evident that he ought, from a concern for the good of mankind, to have ſtrictly prohibited all expreſſions, which tended to make ſuch a dangerous impreſſion. And yet he not only permits his diſciples to *ſpeak* after this manner; but directs them to *record* the expreſſions, for the peruſal of all future generations; and that without giving the leaſt

hint, that the terms are used in a new and uncommon sense, though they appear so impious and blasphemous.

Once more: If Jesus Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was *more zealous for the glory of God* than he. The essential glory of God consists in the eminence of his perfections, by which he is infinitely exalted above all other beings; and his manifestative glory, or the honour he receives from his rational creatures in the acts of religion, by which he is distinguished from every creature. Now Mahomet has glorified God, by distinguishing him from all other beings: but it does not appear that he has been thus honoured by Jesus Christ; since his own expressions and conduct, and the language of his apostles, have a natural tendency to make us consider a mere creature as the Great Supreme. All expressions, which attribute to a creature the characters of God's glory, are sacrilegious. Nay, though they might receive a sense which is not impious; yet they are unlawful, if their ambiguity be such as renders them liable to be misinterpreted, to the dishonour of God, by an impartial searcher after truth. For if, in civil commerce, equivocal language, which, without any force upon the expressions, may be so understood as to injure a lawful sovereign, would be accounted criminal; and if, when the dignity of majesty is deeply interested, we consider the silence of some and the equivocations of others, who ought to speak clearly for their master's honour, as so many implicit acts of treason; have we not reason to condemn equivocations in the case before us, of impiety and blasphemy, though there were nothing else to induce us to do it? But a man must be wilfully blind who does not see, that there is something more than mere ambiguity, in a language which is little short of a perpetual application of the characteristics of God's glory to Jesus Christ.

Hence I conclude, if Christ be a mere creature, that Mahomet has spoken conformably to truth and prudence; to a concern for the good of mankind, and a zeal for

the glory of God. While Jesus—detested be the thought!—while Jesus has spoken imprudently and falsely; while he has spoken cruelly, in regard to us; and impiously, in respect of God.—But if Jesus Christ be of the same essence with his Father, then it is evident, that when he attributes to himself the names and perfections, the works and honours of God, he speaks agreeably to *truth*, because he is God: he speaks *wisely*; for he uses the fittest expressions to convey his own ideas, and to obtain the end intended: he speaks like one *concerned for the good of mankind*; because he appears unwilling that we should be ignorant of a truth so capital and fundamental: and he speaks as one that is *zealous for the glory of God*; because we cannot neglect our duty to him, without offending JEHOVAH. Consequently, Mahomet has not spoken conformably to *truth*; for he has maintained that Jesus Christ is not, what he really is: nor consonant to his *own design* of glorifying God; because, by dishonouring Christ, he injures God himself: nor yet agreeably to a *concern for the happiness of men*; seeing he teaches them to blaspheme Jesus Christ, which exposes to a divine curse.

To the tenour of my arguing several objections, I am aware, will be made. It will be said, for instance; 'Mahomet is chargeable with not having formed sufficiently high ideas of Jesus Christ.' Be it so; the injury which religion has sustained, in that respect, is very inconsiderable; compared with the advantage it has received from him, by destroying those extravagantly exalted notions which men had formed of the Son of Mary. For there is no very great harm in representing a mere creature as less excellent than he really is; especially, if that creature be the idol of mankind; which, on the principles of our opponents, was the case here. But effectually to teach men, not to confound the creature with the Creator, is a capital branch of religious instruction. Mahomet looked upon Christ as

a mere man, yet as a man ſent from God; and it is, principally, under this view that our adverſaries would have us conſider him. If, then, the author of the Koran aboliſh idolatry, and by ſo doing exalt God, as much as men had before debaſed him; he may very well be pardoned the ſmall fault, of not ſufficiently honouring a mere man.—'But ſuppoſing Mahomet had an 'advantage, in ſome reſpects; this does not hinder 'Jeſus Chriſt from having a far greater, in others.' As the two great ends of religion are, the glory of God and the happineſs of men; and as Mahomet has ſucceeded better than Jeſus Chriſt, in his deſign of glorifying God and preſerving men from idolatry; it follows, that he ought to have the preference. For, on the hypotheſis which we oppoſe, Chriſt is ſo far from honouring God, that he robs him of his glory, and Mahomet reſtores it to him.—'Mahomet only *pretended*, never ſincerely 'deſigned, the advancement of God's glory.' I reply, according to the maxim of Jeſus Chriſt, "teachers are "to be known by their fruits."—'He wrought *no* '*miracles*.' Granted: but it is not eſſential to a true prophet to work miracles, as appears by the example of John the Baptiſt. Beſides, the law teaches us, not to judge of a doctrine by its miracles, but of miracles by the doctrine.—'Chriſt was *foretold* by the ancient 'prophets; but Mahomet could never boaſt of any ſuch 'thing.' But can any ſubſtantial reaſon be aſſigned, why the ancient oracles ſhould not foretel the coming of Mahomet, who deſtroyed idolatry in the moſt conſiderable part of the world; when they foretold the appearance of a man who has been the idol of the Chriſtians for ſo many ages? Of a man who, by his own doctrine, and that of his apoſtles, gave occaſion to this dreadful idolatry, to the diſhonour of God and the ruin of millions? Were the coming and miniſtry of a mere man, that would equal himſelf with the eternal Sovereign, a proper ſubject of prophetic eloquence and tranſporting

joy? Had Iſaiah, for inſtance, any reaſon to lift up his voice and ſay to Zion; "Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is "come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee?" — The *morals*, however, of Jeſus Chriſt, greatly excel 'thoſe of Mahomet.' But what real excellence can there be in thoſe morals, which do not prevent Chriſtians from being guilty of blaſphemy and idolatry; which leave Mahomet the honour of being more zealous for the glory of God, and more careful of the intereſts of men, than Jeſus Chriſt?—'Mahomet, it is well known 'propagated his religion by *craft* and *force;* but Chriſt 'by upright and gentle methods.' Granted: but yet I beg leave to aſk, in whom are the marks of a proud and worldly ſpirit moſt evident? in one that is a man, like ourſelves, who attributes to himſelf the titles, perfections, and honours of God; or in a man who, in the eſtabliſhment of his religion, endeavoured to exalt God, by ſhewing that no creature ought to be aſſociated with him?—'Mahomet flatters the *ſordid appetites* of men, 'by promiſing them a ſenſual paradiſe, repleniſhed with 'carnal delights.' Not now to inquire, whether his diſciples do not ſpiritualize their Koran, and take the groſs expreſſions in a myſtical ſenſe; it may be ſufficient here to obſerve; That thoſe vices which ariſe from the ſenſual appetites are not ſo dangerous, as thoſe which proceed from the pride and impiety of the mind. The morals of Mahomet, therefore, are leſs dangerous, in this reſpect, than the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt.

To conclude, ſo long as it is ſuppoſed that Jeſus has given occaſion to Chriſtian idolatry, and while the Arabian prophet is conſidered as having turned ſo many millions from it; the advantages of the *former* will be very few and ſmall, and thoſe of the *latter* many and great: becauſe there is nothing ſo eſſential to religion, as the glorifying of God; nor any thing ſo contrary to it, as the practice of idolatry.—Thus it appears, that the TRUTH of the Chriſtian religion, and the DIVINITY of

Jeſus Chriſt, are ſo united, that we cannot eſtabliſh the one, without maintaining the other; nor give up the *latter*, without renouncing the *former*. But this will appear with ſtill greater evidence, in the further proſecution of my ſubject.

SECTION II.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true GOD, of the ſame eſſence with his Father, the Sanhedrim did an act of juſtice in cauſing him to be put to death; and the Jews had ſufficient reaſon to reject the preaching of his Apoſtles, when they called them to believe on him.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS CHRIST is called GOD.

AS the opinion of thoſe who believe Jeſus Chriſt to be a mere man, conſecrates the Mahometan religion; ſo it alſo juſtifies the Jews in the moſt execrable parricide that ever was committed; that is, the MURDER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Fully to vindicate the conduct of the Jews in this reſpect, on the principles of our oppoſers, we need only to ſhew; That the Sanhedrim had authority to judge Jeſus Chriſt—That they had ſufficient cauſe to condemn him—That they had a right to put him to death—And, that the common people had reaſon to adhere to the ſentence of their Sanhedrim, and to reject the preaching of the apoſtles, when they called them to believe in the crucified Jeſus.

The authority of the Sanhedrim to *judge* Jeſus Chriſt, is inconteſtible; it being the proper buſineſs of that

grand court of judicature, to take cognizance of all capital affairs, which regarded the tranquillity of the ſtate, and the preſervation of religion.—It is equally clear that they had a right *to put him to death*, on a conviction of blaſphemy; and *to reject the preaching of the apoſtles*, if he was juſtly put to death. So that the whole difficulty lies in this; *Whether they could convict him of blaſphemy*. He is no longer on earth. The Jews, therefore, cannot bring him again to the bar, and proceed to a new trial; but they may eaſily know his doctrine, by thoſe writings which his diſciples have left; for all agree, that they ſpake and wrote by his order and inſpiration.

Now it appears, from the writings of the apoſtles, that Jeſus Chriſt was called GOD—That the perfections of God were attributed to him—That he received Divine adoration—That he was equalled with God—And, that the oracles of the Old Teſtament, which expreſs the glory of God, were applied to him. But can all this honour be given to a mere man; can all theſe glories be aſcribed to the moſt exalted of mere creatures, without the guilt of blaſphemy?—Let us, for a moment, put ourſelves in the place of the modern Jews; and ſee whether, ſuppoſing the principles we oppoſe to be true, we are not obliged to perſevere in our infidelity. To induce us to renounce it, we muſt be perſuaded, either, that Chriſt was *not* called GOD—that he did *not* receive Divine adoration—that he did *not* pretend to be equal with his Father—and, that he did *not* apply, nor ſuffer to be applied to him, thoſe oracles of the Old Teſtament which expreſs the glory of God:—Or elſe we muſt believe, that a mere creature may take upon him the name, GOD, with thoſe ideas which that auguſt name conveys, without being guilty of blaſphemy.

The *former* is not poſſible. For Chriſt is called GOD, and the TRUE GOD, in the apoſtolic writings. Thomas, after the reſurrection of Jeſus, ſaid to him; "My Lord,

and my God!" John begins his gospel thus; "In the "beginning was the Word—and the Word was God." Paul calls him, "God manifeſt in the fleſh."—It is of no importance whether this name was given to him in Greek, or in Hebrew: for, in all languages, the term ſignifies an eſſence greatly ſuperior to ours. Beſides, as the apoſtles apply to Chriſt ſo many of the ancient oracles, which ſpeak of the Supreme Being; they muſt have given to him the names of God in general—thoſe names which were of known, eſtabliſhed uſe in the ſacred language.

Here it is worthy to be remarked, that the ſeveral heads of accuſation, which the Jews may form againſt Chriſt, mutually ſupport each other. 'We cannot 'doubt, they might ſay, that he took on him the name 'God, ſince he received Divine worſhip: nor can we 'queſtion but he was worſhipped in a *proper ſenſe*, being 'adored under a Divine character. We have not the 'leaſt reaſon to doubt, but the ſublime character was 'attributed to him, as it *expreſſes the glory of God*; ſeeing 'it was applied with the idea of thoſe perfections which 'are naturally ſignified by it: for he is ſaid to be equal 'with God, after having divine perfections aſcribed to 'him. We cannot but conclude that he is *really equalled* 'with God; becauſe thoſe oracles which ſpeak of God 'only, are applied to him.'—But theſe things deſerve a more particular conſideration.

Every one knows, that we all naturally ſcruple to take upon us the name, God. This backwardneſs muſt ariſe; either from the reverence we have for the Deity, or from ſome other principle. If the *latter*, what is it? If the *former*, it muſt be either from the regard we have for the Supreme Being, or from the reſpect we have for ſome ſubordinate divinity. It cannot be out of reſpect for a ſubordinate deity; for they who deny the exiſtence of any ſuch being, will not, dare not, call themſelves by the name God. If out of regard for the Supreme Being, it muſt be becauſe we are fully perſuaded, that

we ſhould injure him, and be guilty of a capital crime, were we to call ourſelves by the name, GOD; or by any other name that is peculiar to him. If ſo, we cannot but conſider him as an impious wretch, who, not being God, dares to take that name upon him.

The names, JESUS CHRIST, SAVIOUR, and REDEEMER OF THE WORLD, are not more peculiar to the Son of Mary, than is the name, GOD, to the Supreme Being. For as no Chriſtian will give thoſe names to any but the Son of the Virgin; ſo no Jew dares to apply the name, GOD, to any but the Great Supreme. And as Chriſtians no ſooner hear this gracious and glorious name, JESUS CHRIST, than they think of Him that was conceived in the womb of Mary; ſo the adorable name, GOD, is no ſooner pronounced among the Jews, than they have an idea of HIM that created heaven and earth; except there be ſome intimation given of its being uſed in an improper ſenſe. As, therefore, a man who ſhould now call himſelf JESUS CHRIST, and deſire to be treated as the Saviour of the world, would be juſtly condemned of horrid impiety; ſo, if Jeſus took upon him the name, GOD, without being God, the Jews might juſtly accuſe, condemn, and puniſh him for blaſphemy.

It will not avail to ſay, 'Though Jeſus took upon 'him the name, GOD; yet he gave ſufficient notice that 'he was not God.' For it does not appear that he gave any notice of it; at leaſt, not *ſufficient* notice. The contrary is evident from his language and conduct. But, if he be not God, why does he take a name which had been long conſecrated to that Supreme Being? If he be not God, why does he permit men to adore him? adoration being due to God only.—Beſides, as it would be abſurdly impious for a man who confeſſes, that he is not Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him the names and receive the honours which are due to that Divine Saviour only; ſo it is a compound of abſurdity and blaſphemy for one who is not God, to

take upon him the names and attributes of God; and, by receiving adoration, to usurp the honours which are due to none but God.

If Moses, when returning from the mount with his face shining, by reason of his intimate converse with JEHOVAH, had presumed to call himself GOD; to attribute to himself Divine perfections; and to demand the adoration of the people, though he was known to be a mere man; the chosen tribes would have had sufficient ground to reject, condemn, and punish him as a seducer; notwithstanding the wonderful miracles that were performed by him. For, by such a conduct, he would have violated the first command of the law, at the very time in which it was given. Jehovah had said, "Thou "shalt have no other gods before me;" and yet he would have put himself in the place of God.—If, then, the ancient Israelites would have done well to reject Moses, in the case supposed; the Sanhedrim had reason to reject the pretensions of Jesus Christ, and to condemn him for blasphemy, when he either required, or permitted, Divine honours to be addressed to him. For when the names and glory of God are usurped, neither miracles * nor the dignity of the person accused, can, in the least, vindicate his conduct. Not *miracles*: because they cannot authorize blasphemy. Nay, blasphemy is a sufficient ground of utterly rejecting those works, however wonderful, which are wrought in favour of it. Not *the dignity of the person*: because robbing God of his glory is a crime, by so much the more heinous, by how much the more excellent the person is that commits the horrid act.

Should the head of a family, for instance, call himself king; under a pretence that he possesses authority over his children: should he frequently so call himself, without any restriction, or explanation, and

* Admitting, for the sake of argument, that such an usurper could perform real miracles.

also require to be honoured as a king; he would involve himself in much guilt. But the crime would be more aggravated, if a magistrate should usurp the name and the honours of majesty, among his fellow-citizens; because it would be of more dangerous consequence to the state. And it would be still greater, if the governor of a province were to do so; and greater yet, in proportion to the dignity of the guilty person.—Thus the name, GOD, being, by a most ancient and holy use, appropriated to HIM who made heaven and earth; the application of it to any other is so far from being justified, by the excellence of the creature who dares to assume it, that he is, on that very account, so much the more guilty of impiety and blasphemy.

The name, GOD, in our language, and Θεὸς in Greek, answer those august and venerable names which the Supreme Being appropriates to himself, in the Old Testament: names which ought to be sacred to HIM, because he took them on himself, and because they were to distinguish Him from all his creatures. One of them signifies, He THAT IS SUFFICIENT; to denote, that all other beings have need of God, but that He has no need of them. Another signifies, I AM; or, I AM THAT I AM; to indicate, that God is self-existent and independent, unchangeable and eternal. I omit several others, which might be mentioned; but it may be observed of them in general, that they express such an eminence of perfection and glory, as cannot agree to any but the most High.

In the language of the New Testament, and in that of the Septuagint, are two names, Θεὸς, and Κύριος; intended to express what is signified by the various characters which our Maker assumes, in the Hebrew oracles. And, certainly, we ought not to imagine that the names, which God hath set apart for himself in the New Testament, are less sacred, or less proper to him, than those by which he revealed himself in the Old. For if it was then necessary, that God should be distin-

guiſhed from all his creatures; and if, on that account, he took on him ſuch names as expreſs his eſſential glory; there muſt be the ſame propriety, and an equal neceſſity, now. Nay, it is more neceſſary now, that the grand, the infinite diſtinction between God and his nobleſt creatures ſhould be diſplayed and aſſerted; becauſe this is the time, in which it was foretold, that "GOD ALONE "*ſhould be exalted.*"—So that, as there would have been evident and abundant reaſon, to condemn and puniſh a man for blaſphemy, who, under the Old Teſtament, ſhould have uſurped the name JEHOVAH, with the adoration due to him who calls that name HIS OWN; ſo nothing can be more apparent than the impiety of him, who ſhould now uſurp the name, GOD, and receive that worſhip which has been always paid to the moſt High only, under that character.

When Herod, making an oration to the people, was ſmitten by divine vengeance, for receiving this impious acclamation, "It is the voice of a god, and not "of a man!" neither the people, nor he, could conſider it as literally true. Herod, elated as he was, did not believe himſelf to be God; nor could the multitude ſuppoſe that their king was all on a ſudden become the Supreme Being; yet his impiety met with exemplary puniſhment.—If Jeſus Chriſt, therefore, be a mere man, he cannot be acquitted from a charge of blaſphemy, by pleading; 'That he declared himſelf to be a man, 'and that he acknowledged his Father to be greater 'than he.' Becauſe a man may be guilty of horrid impiety, in receiving Divine honours, without either believing or declaring, that he is the true God; as appears by the example of Herod. For he who uſurps the glory of God, though it be but in part, is guilty of blaſphemy; and he who aſcribes it to an uſurper, is guilty of idolatry.

Have not the Jews, then, ſufficient reaſon to abide by the ſentence of their Sanhedrim, and, on the principles of our adverſaries, to maintain; That Jeſus Chriſt was juſtly condemned and put to death, having been convicted

of blaſphemy? And what can be ſaid in vindication of our Meſſiah? It may, perhaps, be ſaid; 'There is a 'manifeſt difference between the conduct of Herod, and 'that of Jeſus Chriſt. The *former* received divine 'honours out of pride, and contrary to the will of God: 'but the *latter* calls himſelf GOD, and receives adoration, 'only becauſe the true God will have it ſo.'—But where, and by whom, has God declared his will, that Chriſt ſhould bear his name, and receive his worſhip? If there be any ſuch revelation, it muſt have been made, either by the prophets; or by his Son; or by the apoſtles. If they ſay, By his *Son;* the Jews will immediately aſk, Whether all the ſeducers in the world do not pretend to divine authority, for what they ſay and do? They all affirm, that the names they bear, the works they perform, and the honours they receive, are by the command of God; yet they are eaſily convicted of falſehood, and their wonderful works, if they perform any, are proved to be impoſture; becauſe they uſurp the characters and glory of God.—If, by the *apoſtles;* they are no leſs embarraſſed. For they who reject Chriſt, condemn his apoſtles; condemn them of blaſphemy, for aſcribing the glory of God to a crucified man.—If, therefore, ſuch a revelation have been made, it was by the *prophets*. But if ſo, Chriſt is the true God. For all thoſe oracles which repreſent the Meſſiah as GOD, ſpeak of him as the TRUE GOD. Nothing can be more expreſs than that command which is given to "all the angels to worſhip him;" nor is any thing more certain, than that it is the true God of whom the words are ſpoken. And as the prophets have ſo expreſsly and repeatedly declared, that there is but *one* God, the Creator of heaven and earth; it is evident that he of whom they ſpeak muſt be the true, the eternal God.

That ſublime Being whom the prophets foretel, as coming into the world; as ſending his meſſenger before him; as commanding his ſervants to "ſay to the cities, "of Judah, behold your God!" is the Creator of

heaven and earth. If not, there must be *two* gods, of whom they speak: but Moses and the prophets unite in asserting, and insist upon it, as a principle essential to that religion which they taught and established, that there is but *one* God. Hear how Isaiah declares the unity and publishes the names of God. 'Thus saith 'the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the 'LORD OF HOSTS; I am the First, and I am the Last, 'and besides me there is no God.' According to these important and sublime expressions, He only is to be called GOD, whose names are, JEHOVAH, THE REDEEMER OF ISRAEL, THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.—Again; 'I am the LORD, 'and there is NONE ELSE; there is NO GOD besides me '—That they may know, from the rising of the sun and 'from the west, that there is NONE BESIDES ME: I am 'the LORD and there is NONE ELSE, I form the light, 'and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; 'I the LORD do all these things—There is NO GOD 'ELSE beside me; a just God and a Saviour, there is 'NONE BESIDS ME—I am God, and there is NONE 'ELSE.'—See, in what a reiterated manner the prophet 'asserts the important truth! Hear, with what vehemence of spirit and force of language, he maintains the supreme dignity of JEHOVAH's character, in opposition to all that are called god, who made not the heavens and the earth, the light and the darkness! Of this the Jews cannot be ignorant. 'On this principle, they 'will say, our fathers condemned your Messiah, He 'called himself GOD, and we know there is but one 'God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Your Messiah, 'not being the Former of all things, could not be 'God; he was, therefore, guilty of blasphemy and 'worthy of death.'

How, then, shall we vindicate the conduct of Christ, if we suppose him to be a mere man, and yet allow that he called himself GOD? Shall we say, that he has nothing of God but the *name?* But if so, any other

man might be ſo called as well as he.—Shall we aſſert that he is a *metaphorical* God; that he is ſo called in the ſenſe in which kings bear the name? But the contrary appears, by his receiving adoration. When we call a man who is exceedingly brave, King of the courageous; we do not mean to aſcribe any royalty to him. Beſides, when we attribute any thing to a perſon metaphorically, we do not uſe the name ſimply, without any limitation or explanation.—Shall we ſay, then, that Chriſt is a *ſubordinate* God? But the Scriptures, by excluding a plurality of gods, exclude alſo every ſubordinate god: for they utterly reject every being, as unworthy to be called GOD, who is not the Creator of all things.—When the Supreme Lawgiver ſays, "Thou ſhalt have "no other gods before me;" does he mean to exclude *all* perſons and *all* things that are not God, or only *ſome*? If *ſome* only, then the Iſraelites were allowed to have *other gods* before him; provided they were but of the right ſort. But if *all*, *all entirely*, then the Jews did right in accuſing Chriſt of blaſphemy, when he propoſed himſelf, or was preached to them as a ſubordinate god.

I may, perhaps, be told, 'When the Supreme Law-'giver ſaid, "Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me;" 'he meant to exclude the falſe gods of the heathen.' But whatever gods he intended, they are excluded by a general propoſition; which utterly forbids all ſuch objects of worſhip as are not the true God. The Lawgiver does not abhor the idols of the Heathen, becauſe they are the idols of *the Heathen*; but becauſe they are not the TRUE GOD, and yet are worſhipped. Suppoſe it were not wood, or ſtone, but a man, or an angel; ſo ſoon as you adore him, he becomes a Heathen idol: otherwiſe, one that worſhips an angel could not be convicted of idolatry, by the firſt command. It is, then, a general prohibition, and abſolutely forbids the worſhip of any one beſides the Supreme Being; conſequently, it muſt entirely exclude all ſubordinate gods.—Nor can the meaning be, to exclude a plurality of *ſupreme* gods.

For if ſo, of all the Heathen deities, the worſhip of none but their Jupiter would be condemned, by this command. Beſides, why ſhould it condemn a crime that never did, and, according to all probability, never will exiſt? for none ever yet worſhipped *two ſupreme* gods.

Were not the Jews in the right, then, when they complained that Jeſus, being a mere man, made himſelf God? Or, can we blame their conduct, unleſs we conſider Chriſt as of the ſame eſſence with Him who created the univerſe? They affixed the idea of the Supreme Being to the name GOD; having been taught, by the prophets, that there is but *one* God, and that all other deities ſhall periſh from the earth. So that if they were under a miſtake, in this reſpect, they were led into it by their prophets; but if not, they were obliged, on the principles of our opponents, to condemn Jeſus for uſurping the names and honours of God.—For it ſhould be obſerved, that names do not *naturally* expreſs theſe ideas rather than thoſe; their ſignification being fixed, either by God himſelf, ſpeaking in the Scriptures; or by general conſent and cuſtom. We are not, therefore, to conſider the *letters* which compoſe the name GOD, in Engliſh; Θεος, in Greek; JEHOVAH, in Hebrew; as having any thing ſacred, or peculiarly ſignificant, in them; but we muſt examine what *ideas* are affixed to theſe names. Now theſe ideas are not ſuch as any particular perſon may pleaſe to fix upon them; but thoſe which have been, and are annexed to them, by the unerring Spirit, in the Bible; and by the common conſent of mankind.—Were a Count of an empire, for inſtance, to aſſume the title of *Emperor*; he would, no doubt, diſpleaſe the princes; and it would be but a poor apology to ſay, 'That by the exalted title, he meant 'no more than a ſovereign prince in his own country.' He would ſoon be informed, that the common conſent of men, not his particular fancy, ſettles the ſignification of the term. In like manner, it would be to no purpoſe

for Chriſtians to ſay; Though Jeſus aſſumed the name GOD; yet he did not apply it to himſelf in that ſenſe in which it is commonly uſed: for the queſtion is not, What *he* underſtood by it; but, What *men ought* to underſtand by it, when it is given to him.

If, therefore, we would know what Jeſus meant, by calling himſelf GOD; or what his diſciples intended, by giving him that name; we muſt inquire what was the *common acceptation* of the term, in the language of men in general, or in that of the Jews, or of the prophets, or of God himſelf. If the name agree to Chriſt, as a mere man, let our adverſaries inform us which of theſe they follow. It is not agreeable to the manner of ſpeaking among men *in general;* for it never was their cuſtom to call a mere man by the name GOD. Much leſs is it conformable to the current language of the *Jews;* nor to that of the *prophets;* nor to that of *God.* The Jews uſed to affix, to that ſacred name, the idea of the Great Supreme; the idea of him who formed the univerſe: for they knew of no other God. The ſame is evident concerning the prophets who had taught them ſo to believe and ſo to ſpeak; and of the Holy Spirit, who had ſo taught the prophets.

CHAPTER II.

The argument continued.

THE Jews, who lived in the apoſtolic times, ought not to be blamed for ſpeaking as God and the prophets had taught them. They cannot be juſtly blamed for not being able to gueſs, that the name GOD had a ſignification which had not been heard of till that time; a ſignification which fully acquitted a man who, without it, would have been convicted of blaſphemy. Much leſs are the modern Jews to be cenſured for ſpeaking, as their forefathers taught them. But let us conſider the various ways, in which the members of the ancient ſynagogue were inſtructed by their prophets, in this reſpect.

The prophets frequently reminded them of this precept; "Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me;" without ever ſubjoining the leaſt qualification, or reſtriction, by which they might learn, that this command was not general and obligatory in all ages and places. Were the Jews, then, obliged to believe, without any manner of notice, that a command ſo inviolable till then, had loſt its force in the time of Jeſus Chriſt?

They conſtantly oppoſe that God who made all things, to every *created* god. As they aſſert the unity of God, with great frequency and great ſolemnity; ſo they diſtinguiſh him by his character, "He made the "heavens and the earth." Nay, they declare that "the gods who made not the heavens and the earth, "ſhall periſh from under the heavens." The Jews could not but conſider this aſſertion, as general; and as teaching them, that no one ought to be acknowledged as God, but him that created the world and is unchangeable.

The prophets taught, that God cannot be *repreſented* by any picture, or image; becauſe there is nothing in the world fit to repreſent him. "To whom," or to what, ſays God, "will ye liken me?" By which the Jews were informed, that nothing which might be repreſented on canvaſs, or in ſtatuary, ought to be acknowledged as God. Conſequently, they muſt conclude, that a mere man was very far from deſerving to be called GOD.

The name JEHOVAH, with all other Divine titles and characters which our Maker aſſumes in the Scripture, are names of *diſtinction;* and were deſigned to exalt him far above all creatures. "I am JEHOVAH, that is "my name. There is no GOD beſides me. Ye ſhall "ſwear by my name. Whoſoever ſweareth upon the "earth, ſhall ſwear by the GOD of truth." Now theſe characters and claims were deſigned to diſtinguiſh God, either from *all* his creatures, or only from *ſome* of them. If the *latter*, in vain does He ſay; "There is no "GOD beſides me." Becauſe it might be anſwered, Though that be thy name, it does not diſtinguiſh thee from *every* creature: for there is, or there will be one, that ſhall bear it with thee. If the *former*, then whoever calls himſelf GOD, diſowns the condition of a creature; and, conſequently, if Jeſus Chriſt aſſumed that name, or any other expreſſive of the ſame glory, the Jews could not but accuſe him of blaſphemy.

The prophets abundantly aſſert the *unity* of God. Nor can we conſider their extraordinary care, in this reſpect, as owing to any thing, but the danger there was of men falling into idolatry; by acknowledging, as God, one that was not JEHOVAH. But were the days of the prophets the only time in which men were in any ſuch danger? Were they not expoſed to the ſame evil, when the Sanhedrim judged Jeſus Chriſt? But why do I aſk ſuch queſtions? for, if we believe our adverſaries, the event has proved, that it was poſſible for men, with the writings of the prophets in their hands, to become

idolaters; by placing a creature, honoured with the name of God, on the throne of the Deity.—The Jews, then, were obliged to be jealous for the glory of God, as the prophets had been in the times of their fathers. For they might eaſily foreſee, that if a mere man were ſuffered to *call* himſelf God, he would ſoon be put in *the place* of God; and the event has verified ſuch an apprehenſion. As the prophets, therefore, had for ſo many ages conſtantly declared, that there is but *one* object, to whom the name GOD belongs, in order to guard the people againſt idolatry; the ſame reaſon required the Jews to withſtand a man, who dared to aſſume the names and titles of God.

Jehovah, by the prophets, declares, "I will not give "my glory to another, nor my praiſe to graven images." The Jews, therefore, had reaſon to conclude, that He had not given his glory to Jeſus Chriſt. For either this propoſition is *general;* and ſo ſignifies, that God never gives his glory to any one: or it is *particular*, and imports, that at ſome times, and on certain occaſions, he does give his glory to another. If the *latter*, the aſſertion is trifling and the reaſoning vain. For the meaning muſt be, God gives not his glory to another, on *ſome* occaſions, though he does it on *others*. Therefore, he will not give his praiſe to graven images. If the *former*, as it muſt undoubtedly be, the Jews were obliged to conclude, that God had not given his glory to Jeſus Chriſt; and conſequently, he could not, without manifeſt impiety, either inveſt himſelf with the titles of God, or pretend to Divine honours.

The prophets have ſo great a reſpect for the names of God, that they carefully avoid taking any *metaphors* from them; which is a very remarkable difference between human and Divine language. The *former*, being that of men who do not ſufficiently reverence the Deity, abounds with metaphors taken from God. Almoſt every thing is repreſented, by one or another, as divine, adorable, infinite. Incenſe and ſacrifice,

dedication and devotion, with many other expreſſions that are taken from the worſhip of God, coſt us nothing, and are frequently uſed. But they are baniſhed from the language of the Holy Spirit; who, ſpeaking of God as God, and of a creature as a creature, avoids thoſe metaphors which would ſeem to infringe on the rights, or the honours, of the Great Supreme; or as might ſeem to elevate the creature above a ſtate of dependence. When the Holy Spirit perſonifies death, he does not call him the GOD, but the "KING of terrors." And though the pſalmiſt, ſpeaking of the rulers of this world, ſays, "Ye are gods;" yet he immediately adds, "but "ye ſhall die like men." The figurative application, therefore, of the adorable name, in this paſſage, cannot poſſibly injure the glory of God; becauſe it is given to princes for no other reaſon, but to form an antitheſis to humble them. "Ye are gods—but ye ſhall die like "men."—If, then, the reverence which the writers of the Old Teſtament had for the proper names of God, be ſo great; and if the ſame reverential regard be found in the penmen of the New Teſtament; who, when ſpeaking of a creature, do not fetch their metaphors from the attributes of God, as the Heathen authors did, and as is common at this day; ought we to cenſure the Jews of an exceſſive tenderneſs, who could not ſuffer the name GOD to be given to a mere man, and given to him in ſuch a ſenſe as requires us to worſhip him? For, either the name GOD, expreſſes the glory of the *Creator*, or that of the *creature*, or one that is *common to both*. It cannot be a glory *common to both;* for if it were, the prophets could not have ſo often declared, that there is but *one* God: beſides, every one of us might call himſelf by the adorable name, without any ſcruple. Nor can it be the glory of *the creature;* for no man ever could ſuppoſe it. It muſt, therefore, be the glory of the *Creator;* a glory peculiar to him. And if ſo, the Jews could not but accuſe

Jesus of blasphemy; who, though a mere man, assumed a name which expresses the Creator's glory.

Once more: The prophets have two principal ends in view, when they proclaim the characters, perfections, and honours of the Supreme Being. The one is, to *glorify* GOD, by exalting him far above all creatures; the other, to *save mankind*, by preserving them from idolatry, and by instructing them in the knowledge and worship of the true God. But these high designs are opposed, are destroyed, as to multitudes, if the Jews permit a mere man to assume the names of God. For, as names are given to persons and things, with a design to make them known, and to distinguish one from another; if a mere man take upon him the names of God, he will, in some degree at least, be confounded with him: and thus the design of the prophets *to glorify God*, by exalting him far above all other beings, is opposed. For as God glorifies himself, by laying a peculiar claim to such characters as do not, as cannot, agree to a mere creature; so the creature impiously dishonours God, by assuming those names which are appropriated to him.—The other great end is no less opposed, by an usurpation of God's names. For when Jesus calls himself GOD, he must apply the name, either *with*, or *without* an idea. If the *latter*, he acts absurdly. If the *former*, it must be either the same which *men in common* affix to it; or a *particular one* of his own. If the same which *mankind in general* annex to the term, it must be that of the Supreme Being; and, consequently, he leads men directly into idolatry. If it be a *particular one* of his own, he lays a snare for immortal souls; for he takes a direct step to lead men into error, from error to idolatry, and from idolatry to damnation. He renders language a commerce of deceit and mischief; whereas, by its natural appointment, it ought ever to be an intercourse of truth and benefits. Besides, the signification of the name, GOD, not depending on the caprice of any particular person; his

latent meaning cannot acquit him from a charge of blaſphemy.

'Jeſus Chriſt, it will be objected, did not call 'himſelf GOD, but the SON of God.' Suppoſing he did not aſſume the name GOD, in the courſe of his perſonal miniſtry; ſuppoſing the Sanhedrim could have produced no evidence of any thing like it, as the ground of that ſentence which they pronounced upon him; yet it is beyond a doubt, that his diſciples gave him both the names and the praiſes which are peculiar to God. When, therefore, the Jews are informed, that the evangeliſts and apoſtles wrote the New Teſtament by his authority and under his peculiar direction; they cannot, ſo long as they underſtand their own language and read their own prophets, but conſider the goſpel as impious, and are obliged to approve the ſentence which their fathers paſſed upon him. For they cannot doubt, but their Sanhedrim had authority to judge him; that they had good reaſon to accuſe him of blaſphemy, becauſe the writings of his diſciples (by which only they are able to judge of his own ſentiments and claims) inveſt him with the characters and honours of the true God; and, that they could not but pronounce a blaſphemer worthy of death, without deſerting their duty and betraying their truſt.

'But they who compoſed the Sanhedrim that 'condemned Jeſus Chriſt, acted on the principles of 'envy, malice, and rage.'—Admitting they did, yet the Jews in after-times will reply; 'It is not for us to '*ſearch the hearts* of our fore-fathers: our buſineſs is, 'to inquire into *the juſtice* of their ſentence. It was 'never heard that wiſe and impartial men, laid more 'ſtreſs on ſurmiſes conceived, of the ill diſpoſition of a 'judge on the bench, than on the characters of juſtice, 'or injuſtice, found in the ſentence he paſſed. We 'cannot penetrate the hearts of men; but we are 'taught, by our law, how to diſtinguiſh blaſphemers. 'For its firſt command is, "Thou ſhalt have no other

" gods before me." By this we are obliged to reject ' your Meſſiah, for aſſuming the titles and honours of ' God; though, by your own confeſſion, he is not the ' God of Iſrael.'

CHAPTER III.

The principal Titles and Characters which, in the writings of the Prophets, form the idea of the true GOD, are applied to JESUS CHRIST.

THAT Jeſus Chriſt aſſumed the name GOD, in a proper ſenſe, appears from his apoſtles having aſcribed to him thoſe perfections, which form the idea ſignified by the moſt venerable name. For, as before obſerved, there is no difference, in this reſpect, between what he ſays of himſelf, and what his diſciples ſay of him; they ſpeaking by his authority and his inſpiration.

To the name, GOD, the prophets affixed the idea of an *almighty* Being, who created the heavens and the earth. The work of creation is frequently mentioned by them, as the grand characteriſtic of the true God. Of this none can doubt.—The formation of the univerſe is alſo expreſsly and repeatedly aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt. " All things were made by him, and without him " was not any thing made that was made. By him " were all things created that are in heaven, and that " are in earth, viſible and inviſible—all things were " created by him and for him. He laid the foundation " of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his " hands."—That theſe things are ſpoken of Chriſt, is evident; nor can the words admit of a different ſenſe, without manifeſt violence, as I ſhall ſhew in a following part of this Treatiſe. Here I ſhall only obſerve, that

the apoſtles, having ſo frequently attributed the creation of all things to Jeſus Chriſt; and that work being ſo often mentioned, by the ancient prophets, as the effect of omnipotent agency, and the moſt obvious character of the true God, eſpecially when contending with idolaters; the writers of the New Teſtament muſt have acted a moſt unaccountable part, and, they being only the amanuenſes of Chriſt himſelf, he muſt have been guilty of impious arrogance, if he be a mere creature.

The prophets repreſent God, as an *omniſcient* Being. Perfect knowledge is alſo aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt. "Lord, thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I "love thee," ſaid Peter to his Divine Maſter.—Should it be objected, 'It is no where ſaid, that Chriſt approved 'of the honour which is here done him, by his apoſtle:' I anſwer, That is little to the purpoſe. For the expreſſions muſt be either falſe, or true. If *true*, Jeſus muſt approve of them, for he is truth itſelf; and they prove the point for which we plead. If they be *falſe*, they are pregnant with blaſphemy: and, if ſo, the honour of God and the ſalvation of Peter made it abſolutely neceſſary, that he ſhould have been ſharply reproved for them. What, ſhall Chriſt ſay to that very apoſtle, "Get thee behind me, ſatan!" when he only endeavoured to diſſuade him from going up to Jeruſalem, there to ſuffer; and ſhall he meet with no rebuke from the humble, holy Jeſus, when he robs God of his glory and gives it to another, by aſcribing a divine perfection to a mere man! Peter's fault, for which Jeſus rebuked him, aroſe from his indiſcreet zeal for the honour and ſafety of his Maſter. He did not perceive, while he was endeavouring to prevent the death of his Lord, that he was attempting to counteract the counſels of heaven; and to hinder an event, by which the glory of God is more highly exalted, than by any other in the whole adminiſtration of Providence.—There is nothing ſo precious as the glory of God, it being the ultimate end of all things: conſequently, ſo far as any

thing is contrary to it, it muſt be deteſtable. But, in the paſſage before us, the apoſtle not only ſpeaks *unadviſedly*, in regard to the glory of God; but, if his aſſertion be falſe, he is guilty of *blaſphemy*. For he not only aſcribes to Jeſus the knowledge of *all things* in general; but alſo that of the *human heart*, in particular. "Lord, thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that "I LOVE THEE." This is a diſtinguiſhing character of JEHOVAH's glory, and a perfection peculiar to the true God. For thus it is written; "The heart is deceitful "above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can "know it? I THE LORD ſearch the heart, I try the "reins." Here the God of Iſrael attributes to himſelf the knowledge of the heart, as his own peculiar glory.

To place this momentous truth in a ſtill ſtronger light, the words of Solomon, in his admirable prayer at the dedication of the temple, may be conſidered. "Thou, even THOU ONLY, knoweſt the hearts of all "the children of men." Hence it is evident, that the title, "Searcher of hearts," is included in that idea which the prophets give of the eternal God; and that it cannot belong to a mere creature, nor be given to him without blaſphemy. Yet it is equally clear, that Jeſus takes the Divine title to himſelf, and that in the moſt ſolemn and remarkable manner. "All the churches "ſhall know that I am HE which ſearcheth the reins "and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you "according to your works." It follows, therefore, that Jeſus not only aſſumes the name, GOD; but alſo aſſerts his intereſt in thoſe attributes which form, in the writings of the prophets, the moſt proper and ſublime idea of the Great Supreme. Conſequently, if Jeſus Chriſt be not the God of Iſrael, the Jews are obliged to reject his teſtimony as falſe, and his high pretenſions as blaſphemous.

It will be ſaid, 'Chriſt does not appropriate this title 'to himſelf in the *ſame ſenſe* in which the God of Iſrael 'claims it, in the ancient prophets. When God is ſaid

'to "know the heart, and to try the reins," the words 'are to be understood of such a knowledge as is peculiar 'to him; for he is not beholden to another for it. 'Whereas when Jesus Christ says, "I search the reins "and hearts;" the words are to be understood of a '*derived* knowledge. For he does not know the secrets 'of the heart immediately and of himself, but because 'God reveals them to him.'—But when a person attributes to himself an eminent quality, or an exalted character, which is calculated to raise a suspicion in others, that he assumes an honour which does not belong to him; he is obliged to explain himself, by removing the ambiguity of the terms; otherwise, his temper may be justly accused of arrogance, and his conduct of robbery. So, if a subject should have a desire to be honoured with the title of *majesty*, under a pretence of his possessing some considerable office in the state; and if he were actually so honoured, he would be guilty of a capital crime, against the dignity of him whose glory he usurped. And though, in his own defence, he should say, That he did not desire, nor accept the title in the same sense, nor affix to it that exalted idea, which it bears when applied to his lawful sovereign, and which is commonly annexed to it by other men; and that he meant no more by it than a subordinate and dependent majesty; he would soon be informed, that his excuses are mean and his reasons despicable. He would quickly be told, that the word *majesty*, being, by general custom and the pleasure of ruling powers, appropriated to express the sovereign dignity of kings; by which they are not only distinguished from all their subjects, but also from other princes; he could not, without giving just and great offence, assume the title in any sense, much less without giving the least explanation of it.—So the title, "Searcher of hearts," is, by divine authority and common use, appropriated to express the peculiar and essential glory of God. *By common use:* For no man, if we except our adversaries, ever ascribed it to any but God;

and believers conſider it as one of thoſe divine characteriſtics, by which he is diſtinguiſhed from all other intelligences, and infinitely exalted above all creatures. *By Divine authority:* For it is God, by the miniſtry of his prophets, who aſcribes it to himſelf; who aſſumes it on different occaſions, as belonging to himſelf only, and as being a peculiar character of his glory. None, therefore, beſides God, can aſſume it without offence; much leſs could any mere creature take it on himſelf, without explaining in what ſenſe he applies it. Yet Chriſt ſays, with an air of authority becoming none but JEHOVAH, and with the utmoſt ſolemnity, as of a matter of the laſt importance; "All the churches ſhall know THAT "I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND "HEARTS; and I will give unto every one of you "according to your works." In which words, the Redeemer connects the idea of *univerſal Judge*, with the ſublime character, *Searcher of hearts;* as the prophet Jeremiah does, when he ſpeaks of the MOST HIGH. And, indeed, if Jeſus were NOT the *latter*, he would be very unfit for the office of the *former;* he being but poorly qualified "to give to every one according to his "works," who is not capable of "ſearching the heart."

Nor have we the leaſt intimation in Scripture, that God's knowledge of the heart is *immediate*, but that of Chriſt *mediate*, or by revelation. For the apoſtle does not attribute this knowledge to Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe the ſecrets of the heart are *revealed* to him; but becauſe he conſiders him as *knowing all things*. "Lord, thou "knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee." For a perſon to know the thoughts of the heart, becauſe God reveals them to him, is to know them only as *man;* but to know them, becauſe he knows all things, is to know them as GOD. Such is the knowledge which is here attributed to Jeſus Chriſt.—Further: If to know the ſecrets of the heart, by revelation, were a ſufficient reaſon of the title, *Searcher of hearts;* the apoſtles themſelves might have claimed the glory of it. For

they, no doubt, as some of the ancient prophets, on particular occasions, had the thoughts of mens hearts revealed to them. This gift, it is probable, was greater in some than it was in others. Suppose, then, that one individual among them had it in the richest measure and to the highest degree, so that he knew all secrets in general. On such a supposition, I demand, whether he might lawfully have assumed the character, *Searcher of hearts?* To assert that he might, is blasphemous; because it attributes that which is peculiar to God and Jesus Christ, to another. If it be allowed that he might not, it follows, that whoever calls himself *The searcher of hearts*, means something more than knowing the heart, *by revelation.*

It may, perhaps, be replied; 'How great soever we 'suppose the knowledge of this man to be, yet the 'knowledge of Christ will be found more perfect; 'which is a sufficient reason why he should not bear the 'title with him.'—But if the supposed person's knowledge be inferior to that of Christ; the knowledge of Christ must be still more inferior to that of God. If, then, it would be unlawful for such an one to assume the exalted title, out of respect for Christ; a regard for the honour of God ought much more to have prevented the man Jesus from ever assuming it. For the honour of God is of infinitely greater consequence than that of Christ, if he be a mere creature. Besides, the knowledge of Jesus, if he be not God, and the knowledge of this man, being both of the same kind, can differ only in *degree.* But the knowledge of God, and that of Jesus Christ, are *essentially* different. God's knowledge of the heart is immediate and of himself; but that of Christ, is mediate and by revelation. So that if the man, supposed to know the heart, cannot say, "All "the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth "the reigns and hearts," without usurping the glory of Christ; neither can Jesus claim the power of searching

the heart, or adopt the title, without usurping the glory of God.

Again: There is a difference, a very material difference, between *knowing* the secrets of the heart, and being the *searcher* of the heart. He who searches the heart, must be acquainted with its thoughts; but it does not necessarily follow, that he who knows its latent desires and intentions, is possessed of a capacity to search it. It may be said of a man, to whom the thoughts of another are revealed, 'He knows his heart:' yet a prudent and pious man would avoid such general expressions, lest he should be suspected of profaneness, and would rather say; 'He knows his heart by revelation.' But he will never say, "He *tries* his reins and *searches* "his heart;" because that would be false and impious. For when any one is said, to know the thoughts, to search the heart, and to try the reins, the phrases do not signify knowledge obtained from another, *by revelation*; but to know, find out, and discover, by his own understanding, what lies concealed from others.—Once more: When Christ says, "I am HE which searcheth the reins "and hearts;" he either means, that we should keep to the natural signification of his words, or that we should depart from it. If the *latter*, he has laid a snare for us; he had a design to deceive us. For what else could be the reason of his talking, with such solemnity, so as not to be understood? And how should he be understood, when he affixes an unnatural signification to his words? If the *former*, we cannot but conclude, that knowing the secrets of the heart, by revelation, and searching the heart, are different things.

The prophets describe the true God, as the *Saviour*, the *only Saviour* of sinners. For thus it is written; "I, even I am JEHOVAH, and beside Me there is no "Saviour." And again: "Look unto Me and be ye "saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and "there is none else." There is an allusion, I acknowledge, in these passages, to the idols of the Heathen,

that were unable to ſave their deluded votaries; but yet this general truth is plainly and ſtrongly implied, That God only can ſave the ends of the earth. The immediately preceding verſe, in the latter of theſe texts, puts this beyond a doubt. For thus it is written, "There "is no God elſe beſides Me; a juſt God and a SAVIOUR, "there is NONE BESIDES ME." And yet Jeſus Chriſt not only profeſſes to ſave ſinners, but he calls himſelf THE SAVIOUR, by way of eminence, and in contradiſtinction to all others. Is it not manifeſt, then, that he aſſumes a character, in the moſt emphatical way, which the God of Iſrael had challenged and appropriated to himſelf?—When the prophets reproved the folly and wickedneſs of them that put their truſt in idols, by ſaying, there is *no Saviour* but the God of Jacob; they either intended to lay down a principle for the inſtruction of men in all ſucceeding ages, or only for the time then preſent. If the *latter*, the reaſon that God uſed in ancient times, by which to confound idolatry, is no longer of any force on ſuch an occaſion: nay, which is more extraordinary, an oracle becomes falſe, at the very time in which it is accompliſhed. For this divinely gracious declaration, "Look unto Me and be ye ſaved, all "the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there "is none elſe;" refers to the calling of the Gentiles, and was not fulfilled till after the Meſſiah appeared: and yet it is ſince his appearance, that we hear of a SAVIOUR and LORD, beſides the God of Iſrael, who delivered that oracle. If the *former*, and if this declaration be a perpetual truth, "There is no God beſides Me, a "juſt God and a Saviour, there is none beſides Me;" then I demand, whether he ought not to be accounted a blaſphemer, who, though he be not the God of Iſrael, yet calls himſelf THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD?

'He calls himſelf, it will be ſaid, a *ſubordinate* 'Saviour.' What, then, does Jehovah mean when he ſays, "I am a juſt God and a Saviour, there is "NONE BESIDES ME—I, even I am the LORD, and

"besides Me there is NO SAVIOUR!" Does he not exclude, *subordinate* gods and saviours? Supposing the ancient Israelites had considered Moses as a subordinate god and saviour, and worshipped him after his death, because they were delivered by his ministry out of Egyptian bondage; would they not have acted contrary to the meaning of these declarations? It is absurd to imagine, that the prophets did not intend to exclude all subordinate gods and Saviours; because the far greater part of Pagan deities were considered, by the dupes of idolatry, under those characters. It is, at the same time, evident, that the penmen of the ancient Scriptures teach us to acknowledge but *one* God, and *one* Saviour, even the God of Israel. Consequently, he who calls himself THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, does not only assume the name, GOD; but also annexes to it, one of the most gracious, endearing, and glorious ideas, that are included in it in the ancient oracles; or that can be affixed to it by men or angels.

The prophets, to distinguish the true God from all other beings, call him, "THE FIRST AND THE LAST." This character they apply to JEHOVAH, as peculiar to him and incommunicable. Yet, in the Revelation of John, it is repeatedly assumed by Jesus Christ.—It is agreed, on all hands, that this very sublime title was never given to any but the God of Israel, till after the incarnation: it was, therefore, become peculiar to Him by ancient and universal custom. Nor can it be questioned, if any creature had dared to apply it to himself, before the Messiah came, but he would have been charged with impiety and blasphemy. And were either man, or angel, at this day to assume it, the same accusation would be laid against him, and his conduct would be detested. Consequently, our adversaries themselves, were it not to serve an hypothesis, would not hesitate a moment to allow; That as this character was peculiar to God, before the Messiah came, so it is now, and so it must ever be; and that it is absurdly blasphemous,

to think of applying it to any other.—Should it be said, 'If any person were to assume this title now, he would 'be guilty of impiety; because he would wrong Jesus 'Christ, to whom it belongs:'—I answer, He would injure God much more, to whom it really appertains. And if any man, who should usurp it at this day, would rob Christ of his honour; he, who should have dared to assume it before the Redeemer came, would have committed sacrilege on the true God. Hence it appears, that this character is peculiar to the Great Supreme.

Again: This title stands among the praises of the Most High; even in those passages where he professedly displays his glories, and asserts his sovereign majesty. Now if it be not adapted to answer such a design, why should it stand in connection with those magnificent descriptions of JEHOVAH's glory? But if it be fitted to express the eternity and majesty, the grandeur and glory of God, it must be peculiar to Him—so peculiar, that it cannot, without blasphemy, be assumed by any mere creature. It is so connected with other characters and attributes, which are confessedly peculiar to God, that it is impossible, without rendering the finest oracles of the prophets nonsensical, to distinguish it from them. Sometimes, for instance, it is connected with his *power*: "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations "from the beginning? I the LORD, the First and with "the Last, I am He." Sometimes it is joined with the characters of his *grandeur* and *majesty*. "Thus "saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer "the Lord of hosts; I am the First, and I am the "Last, and besides me there is no God." Here it is observable, that after the Most High has taken to himself this truly sublime title, he adds, "besides Me "there is no God;" to inform us, that none but He possesses the dominion and glory implied in it, and in those which attend it. At other times, he connects the glory of this title with that which attends his

character as *Creator*. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob "and Iſrael, my called: I am He, I am the Firſt, I "alſo am the Laſt. Mine hand alſo hath laid the "foundation of the earth." Once more: It is uſed to expreſs the *unity* of God. For thus it is explained; "Before Me there was no God formed, neither "ſhall there be after Me." But if this title were not peculiar to the eternal God, how could it ſignify his unity?

Further: When Jeſus calls himſelf, "The Firſt and "the Laſt," he either applies the auguſt character in in the *ſame* ſenſe, in which it was uſed by the prophets, or in one that is *different*. If the *latter*, he leads men, by ambiguous expreſſions, into error and idolatry. Nay, on the principles of our opponents, he is guilty of blaſphemy; becauſe he aſſumes a title, in an abſolute manner, which does not agree to him but with a reſtriction. He alters, by his own authority, the ſignification of terms, conſecrated by a divine uſe. He does what no honeſt and ſenſible man ever did; for he changes the known and ordinary meaning of words, relating to matters of the greateſt importance, without giving us the leaſt notice of it; and, by ſo doing, he opens a door for impiety and blaſphemy, to the whole world. For as he attributes to himſelf ſuch titles as are given to the true God, by changing mentally the eſtabliſhed ſignification of words, in the Old Teſtament; why may not I, or any other man, after his example, aſſume the principal characters of the Meſſiah, by changing mentally, according to my fancy, the moſt known ſignification of expreſſions, in the New Teſtament? But if he apply the character in the *ſame* ſenſe, in which it was uſed by the prophets; then he deſcribes himſelf by a title which they conſidered as expreſſing, the eternity and unity, the dominion and glory of God. And, by ſo doing, he practically declares, that it is not peculiar to the God of Iſrael, to whom only the prophets applied it; and, conſequently, the language

of the prophets is false. For if the God of Jacob be He, before and after whom no God has been formed; how can Jesus be God, and a God also before whom no God existed, or shall be formed? The consequence is, either Christ is the true God, or he is guilty of blasphemy; in attributing to himself a title, which, in the language of the prophets, is peculiar to the infinite God.

If Jesus Christ be a mere man, one cannot imagine how this title can possibly belong to him. For, either *First* and *Last* must be understood of a priority and and posteriority of *time*; or, of a priority and posteriority of *dignity*; or, of *both*. If the *first*, the sense will be; I am the First and the Last *in duration*. But how could one that was born in the fulness of time, be the *first* in duration? If the *second*, the meaning must be; I am the First and the last *in dignity*. But how can Jesus be the *last* in dignity, when John the Baptist, who was greater than any of the ancient prophets, considered himself as unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoe? If the *third*, then the signification of the words must either be; I am the *First* in time, and the *Last* in dignity; which is manifestly false: Or thus, I am the First in *dignity*, and the Last in *time*; which is equally false. For how can Jesus be the Last, in *time?* Was he the last *man* that was born? That cannot be. Nor was he the last of God's *servants*; for there have been many who served God faithfully, and were the honoured instruments of his glory, since the ascension of Christ. Or thus, I am the First and the Last, in *time* and in *dignity*; which is yet more glaringly false. For if he be not the First and the Last, in *time*; nor the First and the Last, in *dignity*; it is doubly false to say that he is so, in both the one and the other.—But our business here, is not so much with the *truth* of his words, as with the *impression* they were adapted to make on the minds of the Jews, who were taught by the prophets. On hearing Jesus repeatedly and solemnly apply this title to himself, they

could not but consider him, as usurping a character peculiar to the eternal JEHOVAH; and, consequently, as guilty of blasphemy. Either, then, the Jews were to blame for opposing impiety, blasphemy, and idolatry; or they could not avoid passing sentence of condemnation upon Jesus Christ, if he spake as his disciples wrote, and if they have given a true representation of his claims, his language, and his conduct: at least, they could not avoid rejecting the gospel, the preachers of it being so evidently convicted of blasphemy.

CHAPTER IV.

JESUS CHRIST declared to be Equal with God.

PAUL asserts, in the plainest manner, that Jesus "thought it not robbery to be EQUAL WITH GOD." We shall see in the prosecution of our subject, the vanity of those evasions to which our adversaries have recourse, in explaining this passage, so as to agree with their hypothesis. But, however we understand the text, it must be allowed to attribute to Jesus Christ some kind of *equality* with his Father, who is confessedly the true God.

Some, perhaps, may say; 'No conclusion can be 'drawn from a single expression; such an one, especially, 'as ought not to be understood in the strictly literal 'sense: because there are examples of a similar expres-'sion, one of which is found in Homer, where it does 'not signify a real and proper equality with God.'—To which I reply; It is very unbecoming to produce examples of this kind, from Homer, did he afford ever so many. For it is notorious, that the writings of the Heathens, and especially those of the poets, abound

with impiety and blaſphemies. This conſideration enhances the value of the Scriptures. For it is their inſeparable characteriſtic, to maintain a wide, an immenſe diſtinction, between God and the creature; by never attributing to the *latter*, what only belongs to the *former*: while, in human writings, men are equalled with God, and God is confounded with men.—It is worthy alſo of being remarked, that Paul is the ſacred penman, who uſes this way of ſpeaking; and he, it is well known, is ever careful to exalt the grace of God, and to refer all to his glory. "We have," ſays that ambaſſador of Chriſt, "We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that "the excellency of the power may be of God, and not "of us."—Beſides, theſe expreſſions being of a very peculiar kind, and ſuch as do not readily come into a perſon's thoughts, plainly intimate, that he had a *particular deſign* in penning them.—'But here, perhaps, 'they may be hyperbolical.' If they be, they intrench on the glory of God. When, upon ſtrict examination, we have nothing to object againſt an hyperbole, but its want of *truth*, the fault is comparatively ſmall; but there ſhould be no reaſon to charge it with being *impious* and *blaſphemous*. Thus, for inſtance, the Scripture never ſays; That a man is as good, as wiſe, or as powerful, as God; becauſe ſuch expreſſions and ſuch compariſons are impious, and pregnant with blaſphemy. This evil, the writers of the Old Teſtament have avoided with remarkable care; and they who penned the New, ought to have been ſtill more on their guard againſt it; becauſe it was foretold as a diſtinguiſhing character of the goſpel diſpenſation, that the pride of man "ſhould "be abaſed, and the LORD ALONE exalted."

Though I might here greatly enlarge, I ſhall confine myſelf to the following conſiderations.—God had repeatedly and ſolemnly declared, by the prophets, That there is "none like him." For thus it is written: "To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeneſs "will ye compare unto him?—To whom, then, will

"ye liken me, or ſhall I be equal, ſaith the Holy "One?—To whom will ye liken me, and make me "equal, and compare me, that we may be like?"— Theſe expreſſions were intended, and well adapted, to confound idolatry; and the truth contained in them was made by JEHOVAH the grand principle of his religion; which Paul could not but know, being well verſed in the ancient oracles. But though he hears, underſtands, and reveres that voice from heaven which demands, "To whom will ye *liken* me? To whom "will ye make me *equal?*" yet he boldly aſſerts, Jeſus "thought it not robbery to be EQUAL with God."— Again: The apoſtle could not but know the ground, or, if you will, the pretence, on which Chriſt was condemned by the Jews; that is, becauſe he aſſerted his *likeneſs* to God and *equality* with him. This was a prodigious offence to man who had heard God ſay, by his prophets; "To whom will ye liken me, and make "me equal?" Paul does what he can to convert the Jews to the Chriſtian faith; yet he never attempts to juſtify the religion of Jeſus, from the charge of equalling a creature with the Creator; though, on the principles of our opponents, it was highly neceſſary for him ſo to have done, for the ſalvation of men and the glory of God. Nay, ſo far was he from endeavouring to acquit the cauſe of his Maſter from ſuch a charge, that he roundly aſſerts, Jeſus "thought it not robbery to be "EQUAL with God;" which is the very thing for which the Jews were ſo offended with Chriſt, and on account of which they conſidered him as deſerving judgment of death. But can it be ſuppoſed that he who rent his garments when he was taken for Mercury, who was a ſubordinate god among the heathens; can it, I ſay, be ſuppoſed, that this very man ſhould equal a mere creature with the INFINITE GOD? If he does, his hyperboles, ſurely, muſt be very edifying, and peculiarly well-timed! And does it not highly become him to ſet

up for an orator, at the expence of piety and the glory of God?

The language of the apoſtles, in other places, is an infallible comment on theſe expreſſions. For they not only apply the name, GOD, to their crucified Saviour; but they annex the ſame ideas to it, which were affixed to the character of JEHOVAH, by the ancient prophets. Seeing, then, the apoſtles give ſuch titles to Chriſt as could not belong to him, if he were not a Divine Perſon and equal with the Father; we ought to queſtion but Paul here uſes the term *equal*, in a proper and literal ſenſe.—Further: Either theſe expreſſions are adopted by Chriſtians, or they are not. If the *latter*, it muſt be becauſe they think the apoſtle ſpake unadviſedly; which ſubverts the credit of his writings, and ſaps the foundation of Chriſtianity itſelf. If the *former*, then we may ſafely conclude, that the other apoſtles ſpake after the ſame manner. And if ſo, we appeal to our adverſaries, Whether the Jews, who heard them ſpeak thus, are not to be juſtified in calling them blaſphemers? when, on the one part, they ſaw that Chriſt was a mere creature; and, on the other, that his diſciples aſſerted his equality with God.

When Jehovah ſays, "To whom will ye liken me?" he does not mean to exclude a reſemblance of *analogy*; for as he exiſts, thinks, and acts, ſo do rational creatures: but his deſign is to exclude a reſemblance of *equality*. Now the one, or the other of theſe, muſt be intended in the text before us. Not the *former*; for if you aſcribe to Chriſt a reſemblance of *analogy* only, you attribute nothing to him, but what may be affirmed of angels, of ſaints, and of men in common: and yet neither Gabriel, nor Paul, nor any man living, could ſay, 'I think it not robbery to be equal with God,' without being guilty of blaſphemy. It muſt, therefore, be a reſemblance of *equality*, which is here attributed to Jeſus Chriſt, according to the natural ſenſe of the term. But though the meaning of the adjective *equal*,

be ſometimes well expreſſed by the word *like;* as when God ſays, "Who is like to me?" Yet, when the term *like*, is taken for *reſembling*, or *conformable*, it is never expreſſed by the word *equal*.—Nor is that equality, which is here attributed to Chriſt, *metaphorical*. For to conſider the apoſtle as ſaying, 'He thought it not 'robbery to be equal with God, by a metaphor,' is abſurd and ridiculous. Beſides, as before obſerved, thoſe figures are impious, which convey an idea contrary to the glory of God.

As the Jews were not culpable for ſpeaking like other men, eſpecially like their own prophets, who inſtructed them; ſo they are not to be blamed for concluding, that none can be ſaid to be "equal with "God," except he be God, or except he wrong God. Nor could they help thinking, that the apoſtles cordially approved of ſuch language concerning Jeſus Chriſt: for if not, why did they uſe it?—'But they explain 'themſelves, on other occaſions.' Suppoſing they did, this propoſition; 'Jeſus, a mere creature, thinks it not 'robbery to be equal with God;' would ſtill be impious. Beſides, by ſuch explanations they would pull down with one hand, what they build with the other.

To conclude; If Jeſus be *not* equal with God, it muſt be a ſin to *think* that he is; and if ſo, why ſhould any one *aſſert* it? To what end were thoſe expreſſions needful? To the glory of God? No; they diſhonour the Deity. To exalt Jeſus Chriſt? But cannot he be exalted without ſetting him on a level with God? Was it to ſhew the accompliſhment of the ancient oracles? But they frequently declare, that there is only *one* God, and that nothing is *like* him. Was it to edify men? But is it poſſible for men to be edified, by hearing of a creature, of one that owes his being to Divine power, and his bleſſedneſs to Divine favour, being exalted to an equality with his Maker? Peter and Paul were not only the diſciples, but alſo the *ambaſſadors* of

Chriſt, and their characters are juſtly held in very high eſteem, by every lover of ſacred truth; yet if either of them had ſaid, 'I think it not robbery to be equal with 'Jeſus Chriſt,' we ſhould have called him a blaſphemer and execrated his memory. Now, on the principles of our adverſaries, God is infinitely more exalted above Jeſus Chriſt, than Chriſt is above his apoſtles. If, then, an apoſtle would have been juſtly accuſed of impiety, had he equalled himſelf with his Lord; ought not Chriſt to be cenſured for blaſphemy, when he claims an equality with God?

CHAPTER V.

Jesus Christ received Religious Worſhip.

THAT the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt eſteemed and treated him as a truly Divine Perſon, and that he claimed, in a proper ſenſe, an equality with God, will further appear by conſidering; That he received, as a tribute due to his dignity, thoſe honours and that adoration, which belong to none but JEHOVAH.

That God, and none but He, ought to be worſhipped, is a fundamental truth. Whenever, therefore, men have ſet up themſelves as objects of worſhip, they have pretended to be gods; and when they have relinquiſhed their claim to divinity, they have ceaſed to require adoration. So that though we had not been expreſsly told, by the inſpired writers, that Jeſus Chriſt is GOD; yet we could not have queſtioned it when we found them aſſert, that he received adoration from his diſciples, and that the angels were commanded to worſhip him.—If Jeſus Chriſt be God, by nature, he has an undoubted right to Divine honours; he cannot

but require them. But if not, we cannot, without ſacrilege and idolatry, addreſs them to him, becauſe they are due to none but JEHOVAH. For though it were poſſible, on our adverſaries hypotheſis, to account for the titles he bears, for the authority he claims, and for the works of creation and providence being aſcribed to him; yet his conduct, in receiving divine worſhip, would for ever remain indefenſible, if he were not the true God.

A man, for inſtance, who ſhould take the name of *king*, where a rightful ſovereign is acknowledged, would certainly be very guilty. But his crime would be greatly enhanced, if he dared to aſſume the titles appropriated to ſignify the *grandeur* of his ſovereign and the *extent* of his dominions. For example, if, in France, he ſhould call himſelf, King of FRANCE, NAVARRE, &c. If, in Hungary, King of BOHEMIA, HUNGARY, &c. But he would be ſtill more guilty, if he cauſed himſelf to be *treated* as a king; if he demanded the titles of majeſty, from thoſe who addreſſed him; and required, as ſome kings do, to be ſerved on the knee. In this caſe, either the allegiance due to the lawful ſovereign muſt be renounced; or this pretender muſt be called an uſurper, and be puniſhed as guilty of high treaſon.—Thus the Jews, on the principles of our opponents, had ſufficient reaſon to treat Jeſus Chriſt. The regard which they had to the honour of God, and the obedience they owed to the precepts of his unchangeable law, would not ſuffer them to connive at the conduct of a man, or of any mere creature, who received thoſe honours which are due to none but the God of Iſrael.

To invalidate this concluſion it muſt be proved, either, that religious worſhip is *not* an honour peculiar to God; or, that Chriſt did not *pretend* to this worſhip; or, that he did not mean to be worſhipped on the *ſame ground*, and in the *ſame way*, as the true God.—It may, perhaps, be ſaid, 'Worſhip is not an honour

'peculiar to God; for the angel who appeared to the 'patriarchs, and to Moſes in the burning-buſh, was 'worſhipped, though a mere creature.'—This is a great miſtake. For that angel was a Divine Perſon and the true God. This appears from hence. Abraham addreſſed him, as "the Judge of all the earth," and acknowledged that he was "but duſt and aſhes" before him. That angel revealed himſelf to Moſes, out of the burning-buſh, as "the GOD of Abraham, of Iſaac, "and of Jacob." From which words Chriſt himſelf infers, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of "the living." Conſequently, he teaches us to conclude, that He who ſpake to Moſes out of the buſh, was more than a creature; was the true God. For he who is "the angel of the Lord," in the oracle of Moſes, is "the GOD of the living," in the language of Jeſus Chriſt, and both according to our hypotheſis.

Again: That honour which is peculiar to God, ought never to be given to any but God. Religious worſhip is ſuch an honour: religious worſhip, therefore, ought never to be given to any but God.—That honour which cannot be given to a creature, without idolatry, is peculiar to God. But religious worſhip is ſuch an honour, as appears from the idolatry of the Gentiles, which conſiſted in paying adoration to objects that were not God.

'But worſhip is two-fold; that is, *ſubordinate* and '*ſupreme*. The *former* is paid to ſubordinate beings; 'the *latter* is due to none but God.'—This diſtinction, were it founded in truth, would be but of little ſervice to the cauſe, in defence of which it is applied; becauſe it is eaſy to ſhew, that Chriſt received *ſupreme* worſhip. This worſhip conſiſts, either in thought, in word, or in action. He, therefore, who requires us to *think* of him, as we do of the true God, would have us worſhip him as ſuch. But Chriſt would have us think of him, as we do of the true God. For he attributes to himſelf the perfections of God, and he claims an

equality with him. Consequently, he would have us think of him, as we ought to do of God.—He who speaks of himself, or directs others to speak of him, as of the true God; would be acknowledged and worshipped as such. But Christ speaks, and would be *spoken* of by us, as the true God. This appears from his taking the names, and ascribing to himself the works of God. If not, why does he assume such names, why does he declare that he performed such works, as are proper to God, if he would not have us *speak* of him as God? What, shall *he* speak of himself as God; shall *he* assert, that he created all things and performed the works of God; and, after all, be unwilling that *we* should speak of him, as God? Absurd, to imagine; impossible, to prove.—He who requires we should *do* that for him, which we cannot lawfully do for any but the true God, expects to be worshipped as such. But Christ requires us to do that for him, which we ought not to do for any but God. This appears from hence. We are bound to love God above all things: consequently, an affection so ardent, and a duty so high, are due to none but God. We ought, however, to love Jesus above all things; to love him more than our lives, which, of all things in the world, are the dearest to us. He requires that we should suffer martyrdom for his sake; and, by so doing, enjoins a duty which we do not, which we cannot owe, to any but God. None of the prophets, nor any of the apostles, ever said; "He that forsaketh not wife and children, and houses "and lands, yea, and his own life, for my sake, is not "worthy of me."

"But Christ declares, that he acts in the name of "his Father, and that the Father is greater than he; "which is sufficient to forbid us addressing him with "*supreme* worship."—To this I answer; Suppose a minister of state should give orders, under his own seal, for coining money with his image upon it; at the same time assuming the names and titles of his lawful sovereign;

would his conduct be justified by declaring once, or twice, 'My sovereign is greater than I, and I act in 'his name?' Should we not, in such a case, have reason to say, He denies by his actions, what he confesses in words, and contradicts himself?—The application is easy. For as there is a certain idea of royalty, which subjects ought never to apply to any besides their king; as there are names and titles so appropriated to the person of a sovereign, that they cannot be given to any other without offence; and as there are particular honours due to a crowned head, which cannot, on any pretence whatever, be paid to others, without being guilty of high-treason; because the signification of words and actions is not fixed by the caprice or authority of any particular person, but by general consent and custom: so, by a most ancient, sacred, and inviolable use, established by the prophets, established by the eternal Sovereign himself, there are some ideas so appropriated to God, that they cannot possibly belong to any other; there are some titles so peculiar to him, that it is high-treason, in a divine sense, to give them to any other; and there are certain honours so peculiarly due to him, that they cannot be given to another, without "denying "the God that is above," and incurring the complicated guilt of blasphemy and idolatry. Such an honour is religious worship. For, if there be any dispositions of heart, if any language of the tongue, if any actions in life, by which it is possible for us to express a suitable distinction between God and every mere creature, they must be those of a *devotional* kind. And as the most sincere, the most fervent, the most sublime adoration we can pay to JEHOVAH, neither expresses, nor implies any more, than a dutiful desire and endeavour to treat GOD, AS GOD; so the least degree of that worship, when given to a mere creature, is an alienation of the rights of Deity, and a placing that creature on the throne of the Most High.

'*Subordinate* worſhip is diſtinguiſhed from that which is *ſupreme*. The *latter* belongs to God only, as the ſource of being and perfection: while the *former* may be given to Chriſt, though a dependent being; he having received, from the Great Sovereign, peculiar honours and authority.'—But there is abundant reaſon to conclude, that this *ſubordinate* worſhip was not known to the divine Legiſlator, nor to the prophets, nor to the apoſtles, nor to angels, nor to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; of all which in their order. That the *Divine Legiſlator* knew nothing of this kind of worſhip, appears from hence: He forbids *all worſhip*, in general, which does not belong to the true God; and that in a moral precept, the obligation of which is perpetual. This he would not have done, had ſubordinate worſhip been lawful; leſt, by ambiguous expreſſions, he ſhould have led mankind into error. Nor would he have forbidden us, without exception, to worſhip any beſides God; but only to worſhip any other with *ſupreme* worſhip. If the Divine Lawgiver intended that the promiſed Meſſiah, though a mere creature, ſhould be adored when he appeared; why did he, in ſuch general terms, utterly forbid all manner of worſhip that is not given to the God of Iſrael?—Beſides, he evidently deſigned to diſcourage and condemn the Gentile idolatry. But that idolatry principally conſiſted in worſhipping various divinities with *ſubordinate* worſhip: for the ancient Heathens, no leſs than the Jews, acknowledged but *one ſupreme* Being.

'The law forbids, it will be ſaid, ſuch ſubordinate worſhip, as terminates on *idols*; not that which has Chriſt for its object.'—But when the law prohibits that kind of worſhip, it does it in general terms; in ſuch terms as forbid *all ſorts* of ſubordinate worſhip, without any exception.—Our adverſaries, perhaps, may ſay, 'There being idols and theſe idols becoming the objects of worſhip, render that worſhip idolatrous.' But they ſhould rather ſay, There is an object worſhipped: this worſhip,

being given to an object which does not deserve it, renders the object, though innocent in itself, an idol: The God of Israel expressing himself in a general way; and forbidding to worship any thing in heaven or on earth, after the manner of the Heathen; it is evident, that so soon as we address subordinate worship to any thing in heaven or earth, we make an idol of it.—It is worthy to be remarked, that the law does not only say, "Thou shalt have no other gods;" but "thou shalt "have no other gods BEFORE ME;" which seems principally to forbid subordinate worship.

The *prophets* were ignorant of subordinate worship. They had no instance of it before their eyes, but what they detested as idolatrous. They never heard, they never speak, of any such thing as lawful; or as having any existence among the pure worshippers of Jehovah. Nay, they laugh at, they despise all subordinate gods; because they cannot conceive how any man can worship an object that "created not the heavens," and causeth not "the rain to descend upon the earth:" which they would not have done, had they known that there was, or ever would be, a subordinate God, to whom adoration should be paid.—'But the prophets, I shall 'be told, charge the people with idolatry, because 'they addressed *supreme* worship to gods who created 'not the heavens and the earth.' Quite a mistake: for the Heathens did not pay *supreme* worship to their subordinate divinities; because they did not look upon them as the source of being and the original of all good; Jupiter being the only god, whom they acknowledged under those exalted characters.

Nor were the *apostles* acquainted with subordinate worship, as appears from the following considerations. They considered all worship, even that which was only external, and could not be esteemed as addressed to a supreme object, when given to a creature, as doing infinite prejudice to the glory of the Creator.—When Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet, he did not look upon

him as the Supreme Being. Though he worſhipped him, it was not, it could not be, as the Original of all good, and the Ruler of all worlds. He knew very well that Peter was but a man; for the angel had told him ſo, when he commanded him to ſend for that apoſtle from Joppa. This worſhip, therefore, could be no more than *ſubordinate*, and even that in a very low degree. The devout Centurion could not poſſibly think of worſhipping a man, called *Simon*, ſurnamed *Peter*, who had lodged at the houſe of another *Simon*, a tanner, with the ſame adoration which he paid to GOD. And yet, as worſhip, even *external* worſhip, was an act determined by cuſtom to expreſs that honour which is due to none but the Great Supreme; Peter did not ſo conſider the good intention of Cornelius, as to receive it. No; with an holy emotion he ſaid to his admiring and revering friend; "Stand up! I myſelf alſo am a man." —Hence it follows, that it is not lawful to worſhip any but the true God. For Peter, from a regard to the glory of God, refuſes and rejects with abhorrence, that worſhip which Cornelius was diſpoſed to give him; by ſaying, "I am a man;" I am not God. Conſequently, ſubordinate worſhip is contrary to the glory of God.— Hence alſo it is manifeſt, that whoever is a mere man by nature, ought neither to require, nor to receive religious worſhip, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate.

More fully to prove and illuſtrate this concluſion, I would aſk; What is it that hinders Peter, on this occaſion, from accepting worſhip? It muſt be, either the reſpect which he has for God, or that which he has for Jeſus Chriſt. If the *former*, he muſt conſider what is called *ſurbordinate* worſhip, when addreſſed to a creature, as injurious to the glory of God: and if ſo, not only Peter, but Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, if he be a mere creature, is bound to refuſe it. If the *latter*, he ſhould not have ſaid, as the reaſon of his rejecting it, "I alſo am a man:" becauſe Chriſt, of whoſe honour he is ſo jealous, is alſo a *man*, and, by nature, no more than a man. But the

apoſtle here tells the Centurion what he *is*, only to let him know what is *due* to him. He calls himſelf *a man*, to inform him, that if any mere man ſhould claim, or accept, this kind of worſhip, he would greatly diſhonour God.—And though the character of Peter, as an ambaſſador of God, deſerved extraordinary honours; though it was under this notion that Cornelius conſidered him, and under this idea that he attempted to worſhip him; yet he rejected it with deteſtation, as an impious infringement on the rights of JEHOVAH, without aſſigning any reaſon but this, "I alſo am a man." It is evident, therefore, and by the conduct of Peter, it is eſtabliſhed as a general principle; That no man, though a meſſenger of God; that no mere man, whatever title he may bear, ought to be honoured with religious worſhip.—In a word, If the regard which Peter has for Jeſus Chriſt, hinder him from ſharing in that worſhip which belongs to the great Redeemer; the reſpect which Jeſus ought to have for the Supreme Being, ſhould prevent him from partaking in the honours of religion with the true God.

Nor did the *angels* know of any ſubordinate worſhip, when John had his prophetic viſions in the iſle of Patmos. If they had been acquainted with it, at leaſt, if they had conſidered it as lawful; that holy intelligence, who converſed with the beloved diſciple and ſhewed him ſo many wonderful objects, would either not have refuſed thoſe honours which the apoſtle was, once and again, deſirous of giving to him; or have rejected them on different principles. For none can ſuppoſe that the amazed, delighted, and revering apoſtle, miſtook the angel for the Great Supreme. He would have worſhipped his celeſtial informant, becauſe he was the *angel* of God; not becauſe he took the ſervant for the eternal Sovereign. The angel, however, not knowing of any religious worſhip which might be addreſſed to a mere creature, ſays; "See thou do it not!—Worſhip GOD."

Asserting, in the clearest manner, that *all* worship must be paid to God, and to him only.

Once more: JESUS CHRIST himself was not acquainted with this distinction, nor knew any thing of subordinate worship, when he was tempted of the devil. Satan, when he tempted our Lord to worship him, did not pretend to be the true God; consequently, he did not solicit Jesus to worship him, as such. For he plainly intimated, that there was one superior to him; one from whom he had received the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The devil, then, desired to be honoured with subordinate worship. But Christ rejects with abhorrence his blasphemous attempt, and shews the iniquity of it, by adducing that precept out of the law; "Thou shalt worship the LORD THY GOD, and Him "ONLY shalt thou serve." It follows, therefore, that this command forbids us to worship any one besides the God of Israel, either with a supreme, or a subordinate worship: or, rather, that this distinction has no foundation in Scripture; but is calculated to disguise blasphemy, and vindicate idolatry.

CHAPTER VI.

The characters of JEHOVAH's glory in the ancient Oracles, applied to JESUS CHRIST; and the argument arising from that application illuſtrated.

THE apoſtles and evangeliſts, when aſſerting the dignity of their Divine Maſter, made no ſcruple of applying to him thoſe oracles of the Old Teſtament, which expreſs the characters of God's eſſential glory. Of this various inſtances have been already produced, which we ſhall examine more particularly hereafter: and our adverſaries themſelves do not deny it, ſince they pretend that thoſe oracles are applied to Chriſt, by way of alluſion, or accommodation.—But it is very ſurpriſing and abſolutely unaccountable, that the apoſtles ſhould make ſuch applications to him, if he be not the true God. For common ſenſe, one would have thought, was ſufficient to inform them, that ſuch things as were ſpoken only of the Creator, ought not to be applied to a mere creature. For it was never known that ſuch applications were made without being cenſured, by thoſe that feared God, of impiety and blaſphemy. The ancient Heathens, indeed, were not very ſcrupulous in this reſpect: for it was common with them to debaſe God and to exalt creatures, by attributing to them the glories of the Deity; and in this the prodigious exceſs of their ſuperſtition principally conſiſted. Their example, however, ought to have no weight with us; as it was, we may aſſure ourſelves, deteſted by the apoſtles. For they had been inſtructed in the ſchool of the prophets; they, therefore, were incapable of falling into ſuch a miſtake. The care of the prophets, in that reſpect, is very remarkable. Always jealous for the glory of God, they are perpetually cautious that the Creator ſhould not be confounded with any of his

creatures. And being thus conſtantly upon their guard, they never apply the characteriſtics of Jehovah's glory to any mere creature.

It cannot, I think, be ſuppoſed, that thoſe exalted and deſcriptive characters, which the apoſtles give of Jeſus Chriſt, are more ſacred, or more peculiar to him, than thoſe which the prophets gave of the God of Iſrael. As, therefore, we ſhould not dare to apply the peculiar characters of Chriſt, to any of his apoſtles; ſo a ſimilar reaſon ought to hinder us, ought to have hindered all, from applying the diſtinguiſhing characters of Jehovah to Jeſus Chriſt, if he be not the true God.—A man would be juſtly charged with blaſphemy, were he to apply to Peter, for inſtance, the following names, characters, and works of Jeſus Chriſt. Were he to call him, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin "of the world—Our king, prophet, and prieſt; the "high-prieſt of our profeſſion, and a prieſt for ever after "the order of Melchiſedeck—The Prince of peace—"Immanuel—The Word—The Alpha and Omega, "the Firſt and the Laſt—The Lion of the tribe of "Judah—The Saviour and Redeemer—The Son of "God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son"—Were he to proceed and aſſert, That Peter "redeemed "the church with his own blood—That he bare our "ſins in his own body on the tree—That we have "redemption through his blood, and are reconciled to "God by his death—That there is no name but that of "Peter, by which we muſt be ſaved—That Peter is "made unto us of God, wiſdom and righteouſneſs, "ſanctification and redemption—That Peter dwelleth "in our hearts by faith—And, that there is no condem-"nation to them that are in Peter"—Were any one thus to ſpeak of that great apoſtle, what would the Chriſtian world ſay of him? They would certainly call him, either a madman, or a blaſphemer.—Nor would their indignation againſt his conduct be much abated, were they to hear him once and again acknowledge;

'That Jesus Christ is greater than Peter.' For they would boldly tell him, that, by such a declaration, he only contradicted himself, and tacitly confessed his blasphemy.—Nor would it avail such an one to say, 'That the application he makes of the characters and 'attributes, the grace and works, of Jesus Christ to 'Peter, is only by way of *allusion* and *accommodation*.' For it would quickly be replied; Such allusions and accommodations are impious; are absolutely unwarrantable; are pregnant with blasphemy.

If, then, an application of the principal characters, attributes, and works of our Lord to Peter, would be considered and treated by Christians, as abominable blasphemy; it must be a much higher degree of that malignant crime, to apply the names and titles, the attributes and works of the Supreme Being, to Jesus Christ, if he be not a Divine Person. Nor is it any wonder that the Jews should so consider it. For if the disproportion between Jesus and Peter be great, that which is between Christ and God is inconceivably greater, according to the principles of our opponents; the *former* being finite, the *latter* unbounded. Consequently, the blasphemy, in one case, is infinitely greater than that in the other.

The impiety of applying the characters of Christ to Peter, will appear in a still stronger light, if, in the case supposed, he who makes the application be considered as knowing, that this question, Is Peter equal to Jesus Christ? had been debated on very important occasions; and that he foresaw this error would become general in the world; so that, for many ages, Peter would bear the names and receive the honours of Jesus Christ. In such a case, he would be guilty of prodigious impiety indeed; the consequences foreseen being so injurious to the honour of Christ, and so fatal to the souls of men.—This, it is obvious, is applicable to the apostles. For they were not ignorant that this question, Is Jesus Christ equal with God? had been debated,

Nay, they well knew, that it was under a charge of pretented blaſphemy, for claiming an equality with God, that the Jews had perſecuted their Maſter and procured his death. And as they foreſaw that falſe teachers would ariſe in future ages, and were able to deſcribe their heretical doctrines; they could not be ignorant, that vaſt multitudes profeſſing Chriſtianity would ſo apoſtatize, as to put Jeſus Chriſt, a mere creature, in the place of God. But if they knew and foreſaw theſe things, ought not a zealous regard for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the ſouls of men; to have prevented their applying thoſe oracles of the Old Teſtament, which expreſs the glory of JEHOVAH, in contradiſtinction to that of his creatures, to Jeſus Chriſt? —Who, then, on the principles of them we oppoſe, can juſtify the conduct of the apoſtles, in ſo doing; Who can exculpate Jeſus himſelf, by whoſe command and inſpiration they wrote? Who can juſtly condemn the conduct of the Sanhedrim, who arraigned him for blaſphemy and cauſed him to end his life on the croſs, as an enemy to God and a deceiver of men? Or who can blame the modern Jews for continuing in their infidelity.

SECTION III.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true GOD, of the same essence with his Father, He and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error.

CHAPTER I.

The principles which we oppose, obscure, depreciate, destroy, those exalted ideas which JESUS gives us of his Father's Love, and of his own Compassion to sinful men.

THE general reason of the leading proposition in this Section, is, The sacred writers of the New Testament have *not* spoken of Christ, as of a mere creature; though they were perfectly well informed, as to his true dignity and real character.—But it is necessary that I should be more particular. In order, therefore, to prove and illustrate the proposition, I shall endeavour to shew, That the Socinian hypothesis obscures, depreciates, and destroys, those exalted ideas which Jesus Christ gives us of his Father's love, and of his own compassion to sinful men—That it so weakens the idea, which is given us in the New Testament, of the greatness of the mystery of godliness, that one cannot help suspecting the apostles of a design to deceive us, by bombastic expressions—That it deprives Jesus Christ of his honour, by making him possess, in a metaphorical sense, those titles which are given him in one that is proper—That it supersedes the necessity and vacates

the death of Chriſt—And, that it renders the language of Scripture obſcure and falſe, abſurd and impious.

I affirm, then, that the Socinian hypotheſis obſcures, depreciates, and deſtroys thoſe exalted ideas which Jeſus gives us of his Father's love, and of his own compaſſion to ſinful men. It is manifeſt, that the grand benefit and the higheſt evidence of the Father's love conſiſt, in "giving HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON," and in delivering him up to death for us. This gift, according to the Holy Ghoſt, includes all others. For the apoſtle ſays; "He that ſpared not his own Son, "—how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us ALL "things?"—But if Jeſus be by nature a mere man, or a mere creature, the gift muſt be of incomparably leſs value than the ſalvation of mankind: and, ſo far from wondering that God has purchaſed our ſalvation at ſo *dear* a rate, we have reaſon to be ſurpriſed that he ſhould procure it at ſo *ſmall* an expence. For however holy and excellent we may ſuppoſe Jeſus to be, yet we muſt allow, that an innumerable multitude of immortal beings, who love God with all their hearts and ſerve him with all their powers, will be, in the day of their conſummation, a more delightful object in the eye of Omniſcience than Jeſus Chriſt, if he be a mere creature. The ſalvation of mankind, therefore, is more precious than the life of Chriſt; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that in loſing his life, he did not loſe his holineſs.—But the compariſon here, does not only lie between Chriſt and the multitudes redeemed by him; it extends alſo to the *temporal* life which he loſt for them, and that *eternal* life which they acquire by him. The reſult, then, of ſuch a compariſon muſt be, that the gift of Chriſt, as a mere creature, is of much leſs value than the ſalvation of mankind.

But, if Jeſus Chriſt be GOD-MAN, the intimate union of the humanity with his Divinity, may well be conceived to render his life and blood infinitely precious. Of this we may aſſure ourſelves, by reaſoning from the

leſs to the greater. A clod of the valleys, for inſtance, is of no worth or dignity: we do not care how many blows it receives; it makes no difference to us, whether it be preſerved or deſtroyed. But if it be united to a ſpirit, the union will immediately confer a dignity upon it; ſo as to give a proportional value to its actions, or ſufferings, on the behalf of any one. Then ſuppoſe it exalted to an union with the Divine eſſence, and its intimate relation to God will render its vicarious obedience and ſufferings of infinite worth.—Or thus; If the ſufferings of a perſon of quality be of more value than thoſe of a peaſant; if thoſe of a king's ſon, than thoſe of a perſon of quality; and if thoſe of a king himſelf, than thoſe of his own ſon; it follows, if we proceed in this gradation *ad infinitum*, and can find a perſon whoſe dignity has no bounds, his ſufferings will be of infinite value.—Such, according to our hypotheſis, is JESUS CHRIST: for he is "GOD manifeſt in the fleſh." In all his ſufferings, and in the depth of his humiliation, he poſſeſſed the glories of the GODHEAD; which ennobled and dignified, beyond conception and beyond bounds, all that he did and all that he underwent for the ſalvation of ſinners. Such a Saviour, being the gift of the Divine Father to miſerable men, muſt be a preſent of infinite value, and could proceed from nothing ſhort of infinite love.

But, after all that can be ſaid for the contrary ſentiment, a man is but a man; and we ſhould exalt the mercy of God at a childiſh rate, were we to exclaim; 'Unſpeakable love! unbounded mercy! which 'gave the temporal life of *a mere man*, for the eternal 'ſalvation of mankind!' Nor would an exclamation of this kind be much more pertinent, on the Arian hypotheſis. There muſt neceſſarily, therefore, be a more exalted meaning in theſe and ſimilar expreſſions; "In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, "becauſe that God ſent his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON "into the world, that we might live through him—

"God so loved the world, that he gave his ONLY "BEGOTTEN SON"—There must, I say, be a more exalted meaning in them, than that which is given to them by our opponents.

When Paul says, God "spared not his OWN SON;" the meaning is, that he gave us *the life* of his Son. Then, reasoning from the greater to the less, he concludes, that God will give us all other blessings: because the apostle considers the life of Christ, as more valuable and more precious than all things besides. But is there any proportion—let common sense be the judge—is there any proportion between the temporal life of a man like ourselves, or of any mere creature, and the eternal felicity of all the redeemed? Or, can any thing be more weak, inconclusive, and false, than the apostle's reasoning, if the principles of our adversaries be true?

They will say, 'God manifests his love, by giving 'us eternal life *with* his Son.' I reply, The assertion includes two things; everlasting life, and the way in which it is granted; that is, by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The *former*, being vouchsafed to guilty and miserable creatures, is undoubtedly an evidence of Divine love: the *latter* is but very weakly expressive of any such thing. For it cannot, surely, be considered as a *great* and *wonderful* effort of God's love, to give the temporal life of *one* man, for the eternal life of *millions*.

Let me illustrate the point. In the deliverance of the ancient Israelites from Egyptian bondage, two things may be remarked. God redeems them from the slavery under which they groaned; and, previous to their deliverance, he commands them to kill the paschal-lamb, and to sprinkle its blood on the door-posts of their houses. The love of God to the tribes of Jacob, in granting them deliverance, is greatly to be admired; for they were reduced to a sad extremity, and had long desired to be relieved. But we should think ourselves

much abuſed, if any one endeavoured to perſuade us; That the love of God to them appeared in a *wonderful manner*, becauſe the blood of a *lamb* was the ſign, to the deſtroying angel, to ſpare their firſt-born; or, becauſe the ſacrifice of the *paſſover* was a mean, in the hand of God, of working out their deliverance. Should any one exclaim; 'Behold, how God loved the Iſraelites! 'He ſo loved them, that he put a *lamb*, nay, *many lambs* 'to death, that he might redeem them from ſlavery!' would you not think him delirious?—But here I ſhall be reminded, 'That the life of Chriſt, as a mere man, 'is incomparably more precious than the life of a 'ſacrifice under the law.' Suppoſe it be; yet, as the life of a lamb bears no proportion to the temporal deliverance of the Iſraelites; the temporal life of Jeſus, as a mere man, or a mere creature, can bear no proportion to the eternal life of mankind. Nay, in the *former* of theſe two caſes there is *ſome* proportion, and a compariſon may be formed; but none at all in the *latter*. For, as the life of a lamb is temporal, ſo was the life of an Iſraelite, which was redeemed by it; and it muſt be allowed, that between temporal and temporal there is ſome proportion. But the life of Chriſt, as a mere creature, is temporal and of a limited worth; whereas the life he purchaſed for us, is eternal and of infinite value; between which there is, there can be, no proportion.

'The love of God appears, it will be ſaid, not in 'giving a man, ſimply conſidered; but in giving one 'that is his *own Son*.' But is Jeſus the Son of God in a *proper*, or in a *figurative* ſenſe? If the *former*, it muſt be by eternal generation, which is that for which we plead. If the *latter*, I deſire to be informed, Whether it be an extraordinary and an aſtoniſhing effort of Divine love, to give a man for our redemption, who is the Son of God only by *a metaphor*?—Suppoſe a ſovereign were obliged to deſtroy a great number of his ſubjects, to aſſert the rights of juſtice and maintain the honour of his laws;

except ſome perſon be found worthy of being admitted as their ſubſtitute, who, by laying down his life, ſhall deliver them from death. Suppoſe, further, that this prince, being moved with compaſſion, ſhould engage to give the life of his own ſon for their redemption; you could not but conceive the higheſt idea of his mercy and love, to his offending ſubjects. But if, afterwards, you ſhould be well informed, that he did not give his *own* ſon, and be alſo aſſured that he *never had*, properly ſpeaking, a ſon of his own; but that all the myſtery of this aſtoniſhing love, which made ſuch a noiſe in the world, conſiſted in this: He adopted one of his ſubjects; took him out of a ſtate of extreme indigence; educated him like the ſon of a prince; determined to give him up to death, as a ranſom for his periſhing ſubjects; and then, if it were poſſible, to reward his ſufferings, by making him the heir of his crown;—in ſuch a caſe, it would be immediately ſaid, 'Though the conduct of this prince is very extraordinary, and though his clemency is worthy of admiration, in pardoning attainted rebels, and in redeeming thoſe who deſerved to periſh; yet it is a childiſh hyperbole to exclaim, 'Behold, how he 'loved his kingdom! He ſo loved it, that he gave his 'Son, his *own* Son, his *dearly beloved*, and *only begotten* 'Son, to die for his offending ſubjects!'

Still more fully to illuſtrate the point, we may borrow an inſtance from the ſacred Scriptures. The offering up of Iſaac, our adverſaries themſelves allow, was a type of the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt. Iſaac, the delight of his father and his only ſon, was bound in order to be ſacrificed by Abraham himſelf, notwithſtanding all the yearnings of parental bowels. Thus he became a lively type of Chriſt; of Him, who is the only begotten of the Father, and in whom he takes infinite and eternal delight. Him did the Father deliver up to ſufferings and ſorrows, to agonies and death.—The types, which prefigured the death of Chriſt, all agree in repreſenting him as ſuffering in our ſtead; as the ancient ſacrifices

were ſubſtituted in the place of thoſe for whom they were offered. Every type, notwithſtanding, had its particular relation, by which it is diſtinguiſhed from others. Thus the blood of the paſchal lamb, being ſprinkled on the door-poſts of the Iſraelitiſh houſes, ſecured the inhabitants from the ſword of the deſtroying angel. So the blood of Chriſt, being ſprinkled on our hearts, preſerves us from the ſtroke of Divine juſtice. But the offering up of Iſaac, being without the ſhedding of blood, cannot have this reſemblance with Jeſus Chriſt. We muſt, therefore, look for another, which conſiſts in this: As Abraham offered up his only ſon, ſo the Divine Father delivered up to death his only begotten Son.—Suppoſe, then, any one were to perſuade and convince you, That Abraham did not offer up his *only* ſon, nor his *own* ſon; but took the ſon of Eliezar, gave him the name of Iſaac, and, if you will, put on him the cloaths of Iſaac; you would immediately forbear to wonder at the obedience and faith of the renowned patriarch, in making no ſcruple to ſacrifice his own and only ſon.—We have been wont to look for the *image* only, in a type, and for the *reality*, in its accompliſhment: but, if we believe our adverſaries, we muſt invert this order; we muſt look for the reality in the *type*, and the image in its *accompliſhment*. According to this new mode of interpretation, Abraham performed a great and wonderful act of obedience, by which his faith in the promiſes and his love to God have been rendered illuſtrious to all generations; for he offered up his *own ſon*, his *dear* and *only ſon*; and this he did in reality, not in appearance only. But God, in delivering up Jeſus to death, gives us only a *ſervant*, whom he *calls* his Son, that there might be a greater appearance of love in his dying for us: ſo that theſe and ſimilar expreſſions, "He ſpared not his own Son," are uſed with little propriety; are vain and deluſive.

To advance the dignity of Jeſus Chriſt, it may, perhaps, be ſaid; 'He, whom God gave to be our Saviour,

'is the heir of eternal life.' But if he obtained this exalted honour, in consequence of his sufferings, and as a reward of his death; though it may be said, God crowns his servant to reward his patience; yet it still remains a truth, that he gave us no other than a *servant*, for the redemption of men; a servant who was bound to fulfil the Divine law for *himself*, being then but an "unprofitable servant."

The sentiment of our adversaries is no less injurious to the love and compassion of Christ, as revealed in the gospel. On their hypothesis, it is depreciated, obscured, lost. If he really suffered in *our* sense, he underwent, for a season, the weight of the Divine curse; his very soul was penetrated by the sword of eternal justice; and he felt the desertion of his Father, with a grief proportional to the ardour of his own love. Thus his love to sinners is equal to the terrors of God's avenging justice; under the stroke of which he agonized, bled, and died.—But if he suffered only in the sense of our adversaries; if he suffered, without bearing the sins of men, or sustaining the punishment deserved by them; there was nothing in his death deserving of our astonishment, in regard of his love to us, nor any thing very heroical in it. On this supposition, Codrus, king of the Athenians, would be as worthy of praise as Jesus Christ. For that prince, putting himself at the head of his army against the enemy, and being persuaded, by the answer of some oracle, that if he himself were not slain in the battle, his subjects could not gain the victory; threw aside his royal apparel, put on ragged cloaths, went into the camp of the enemy, and frustrated their design to save him, by provoking a soldier who slew him. The love which this Athenian prince discovered for his subjects, by this instance of his concern for their welfare, is equal, more than equal, to that of Christ for believers. The *former* freely gave up his life, with a view to preserve his country from slavery, though uncertain as to a future state of existence: but the *latter* lays down

his life in absolute certainty of living again after three days, and of reigning for ever with his redeemed.

On the hypothesis opposed, we have more reason to admire the love of God to Jesus Christ, than that which the Father has manifested to us, by him. God, indeed, in the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls, manifests his love and mercy to us; and this we ought to acknowledge with gratitude and joy. But in the recompense he makes to Jesus Christ, for having suffered death, by making him the depositary of all spiritual gifts; by granting him the power of bestowing eternal life, and of inflicting eternal death; and by conferring upon him names of the highest dignity and expressive of Divine authority; he manifests his love to him in an unparalleled way—in such a manner and to such a degree, that Christ has no reason to grudge the pains he underwent and the blood that he shed, in order to arrive at such a state of honour and happiness. Nay, he could not have done so well for himself in any other way, nor so much to his own advantage. So that instead of saying, "God so loved *the world*, that he "gave his only begotten Son;" we must say, 'God so 'loved *Jesus Christ*, that, after he had honoured him 'with the title of *his Son*, he gave him the world, and 'put all things in subjection to him.' Instead of saying, "He that spared not HIS OWN SON,—how shall he not "with him also freely give us all things;" we must say, 'It is no wonder that he who promises to give us *eternal* 'life, has given us the life of *Jesus Christ*.'

'But Jesus Christ, they will say, is the *master* and we 'are the *servants*: it must, therefore, be an extraordinary 'act of love, for a master to give himself up to death 'on purpose to ransom slaves; and such slaves as were 'his enemies.'—Here it is necessary to consider the love of the Father, and the love of the Son, in a separate view. The Father gives, not himself, but Jesus Christ, to die for us; and Christ, it is manifest, cannot be called *master*, with regard to God. In that respect, he is as

much a ſervant as any of us; he being God's own creature and ſubject to his laws. God, therefore, does not give a maſter, but his own *ſervant*. He is, indeed, the moſt perfect of all that ever bore the character, yet he is but a ſervant, and muſt be ſo for ever. So that though the love of God is manifeſted, in ſaving his enemies from deſerved ruin; yet the excellence of that love is far from appearing in the gift of a *ſervant*—A ſervant, that owes his exiſtence to a ſovereign act of Divine power, and all his bleſſedneſs to the communications of Divine favour—A ſervant, who, in the redemption of ſinners, loſes neither his holineſs, happineſs, nor glory: who loſes his life but for three days, by which loſs he obtained the empire of the univerſe; and who, conſequently, ſacrifices no great matter on his part. For if he be a mere creature; if, in ſuffering, he have nothing to fear but death itſelf; if, by his ſufferings, he obtain eternal felicity for thoſe he redeems; and if he is to be highly exalted after his abaſement, where is the mighty effort of his love? They who devoted themſelves for the preſervation of their country, in the certainty of dying, and the uncertainty of living after death; obtaining for a recompence only an imaginary glory, which could not abate the horrors of diſſolution; offered much greater violence to themſelves than Jeſus Chriſt did, in all that he underwent. Nay, there are few men in the world who would not be ready to ſuffer a ſimilar death, on the ſame conditions. Where is the man who, if it were in his power, would not be willing to purchaſe eternal happineſs for innumerable millions of his fellow-creatures, by ſuffering the pains of crucifixion; if he were ſure to riſe again the third day, and to enjoy, as the reward of his ſufferings, immenſe felicity, everlaſting honours, and dominion over all creatures? It muſt therefore, be granted, that Jeſus Chriſt is *not* a mere man, and that he did *not* ſuffer death like that of other men, who have fallen martyrs to the truth: but that he is really a Divine Perſon, and, being incarnate,

died under the ſtroke of eternal juſtice, as the ſubſtitute of the guilty, that he might redeem the wretched and ſave ſinners from the wrath to come. For, let our adverſaries make uſe of what evaſions they will, they cannot overturn the doctrine of our Saviour's Divinity, without eſſentially altering the Chriſtian religion; deſtroying the true ſenſe of the ancient types; and ſo depreciating the love of God to ſinners, in the gift of his Son, and the compaſſion of Jeſus in dying for them, as to render the ſtrongeſt and fineſt expreſſions of Scripture, reſpecting Divine love, little better than arrant bombaſt, or mere flights of imagination.

Of this they ſeem to be conſcious, when called to explain themſelves on the ſubject of our heavenly Father's love, which ſo ſtrongly characterizes the covenant of grace. 'God, ſay they, was the Father 'of juſt men under the Jewiſh œconomy; but he did 'not appear to be ſo. This is the reaſon why he is 'ſeldom called *Father*, in the Old Teſtament. Nor is 'he ſo called there, becauſe he deſigns to give us eternal 'life; but becauſe he created us, and beſtows upon us 'the good things of time.'—The Socinians make the wonderful love of God to conſiſt, in his giving us *eternal life;* and, in ſo doing, they ſpeak agreeably to their own ſentiments. But the writers of the New Teſtament ſpeak a different language. They repreſent the infinite greatneſs and aſtoniſhing excellence of God's love, as appearing in the gift of HIS OWN SON. This they conſider as the *grand evidence* that God loves mankind. For thus they ſpeak, and thus the Redeemer himſelf ſpeaks; "God ſo loved the world, that he gave HIS "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—In this was manifeſted the "love of God, becauſe he ſent HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN "SON—He that ſpared not HIS OWN SON."—This, on the principles of our oppoſers, is an inſurmountable difficulty. When they prove God's love to men, by his giving them *eternal life*, we underſtand them very well; but when they endeavour to prove it, by the

Father giving to us *his Son*, we can diſcern but little propriety, or truth, in what they ſay.

They, indeed, tell us, 'That God, in giving his 'only Son to be a ſacrifice for our ſins, engages himſelf 'to us, by a pledge of ineſtimable value; and promiſes, 'not only to forgive our tranſgreſſions, but alſo to give 'us eternal life. And by the manifeſtation of this great 'love to us, when we were his enemies, he effectually 'draws and reconciles us to himſelf. And, as he will 'not forgive our ſins but by means of his Son, who 'gives himſelf for them; he thereby engages and ſubjects 'us to his Son: and at the ſame time declares how 'much he abhors thoſe ſins, which muſt be expiated by 'his Son's blood; and what an averſion we alſo ought 'to have for them.'—Such reaſoning is only calculated to conceal the weakneſs of the cauſe it is intended to defend. For, not being able to prove the greatneſs of God's love to mankind, in that way which the apoſtles take to exalt it; that is, "by the gift of HIS OWN "SON;" our adverſaries prudently collect ſuch conſiderations as are, excluſive of its *grand* evidence, beſt fitted to diſcover the Father's affection for us. Theſe conſiderations are, the remiſſion of ſins and eternal life; our being enemies to God, when he formed the deſign of ſaving us; and thoſe inducements to holineſs, which are drawn from the method in which our ſins are forgiven. But theſe conſiderations, however great and noble in their proper places, leave the difficulty before us in its full force. For our inquiry is, Whether God preſents us with a great, a wonderful, an incomparable gift, when he gives the life of a *mere man* for our ſalvation? *This* is the queſtion before us; nor will the followers of Socinus ever be able to ſatisfy either themſelves, or others, upon it.

'God, ſay they, in giving his Son, engages himſelf, 'by a pledge of ineſtimable value, to give us eternal 'life.'—But can it be ſaid of a mere man, how holy ſoever he be, that he is a pledge of *ineſtimable value?*

Or, can the gift of his *temporal* life, which he parts with only for three days, be conſidered as a perfect ſecurity, that believers ſhall enjoy *eternal* happineſs?—Nay, ſuppoſing Jeſus to be, by nature, the moſt exalted of all mere creatures; would it be logical, would it be rational, thus to argue? If God, in his great love, delivered up *one* mere creature to death, we may ſafely conclude he will deliver *millions* from it. If he delivered up one to *temporal* ſufferings, he will certainly deliver vaſt multitudes from *eternal* torments. If he gave a perſon *infinitely inferior* to Himſelf, to endure the pains of crucifixion for us: he will undoubtedly grant us *the enjoyment of Himſelf*, to make us completely and everlaſtingly happy. How different the apoſtle's manner of arguing, in a paſſage before cited! "He that ſpared "not HIS OWN SON, but delivered him up for us all; "how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all "things?" Whoever duly conſiders how Paul ſpeaks of *God's own Son*, of *us all*, and of *all things*; cannot but obſerve he ſuppoſes it quite evident, that there is *no proportion* between Jeſus Chriſt and all the redeemed, though taken collectively; nor between the gift of Him, and the grant of all other bleſſings. But ſuch a way of ſpeaking is abſolutely unaccountable, is highly abſurd, on the hypotheſes oppoſed.—'God engages 'himſelf, by a pledge of ineſtimable value, to give us 'eternal life.' What, was it the capital deſign of the death of Chriſt, that it ſhould be a *pledge* of our future felicity! As if God had cauſed Moſes to die, many years before he did, that his diſſolution might be a pledge to the Iſraelites, of their departure out of Egypt and ſettlement in the land of Canaan!—'By his great 'love to us, when we were his enemies.' But where is this *great* love? Is the life of a *mere man* ſo precious? eſpecially of one who, by dying, exchanges a ſtate of ſufferings and ſorrows, for a ſtate of honour and joy, which he obtains for himſelf and all his diſciples.—'And as he will not forgive us our ſins, but by means

'of his Son, who gives himſelf for them; he thereby 'engages and ſubjects us to his Son.' This very nearly diſcovers, what our opponents are aſhamed to own, and yet would be obliged to confeſs, were they to reaſon conſequentially from their own principles. The conſequence I mean, is, That the death of Chriſt is more beneficial to himſelf, than it is to us; and, that God has done more for him, on *that account*, than he does for us. We ought, therefore, no longer to ſay; "God ſo "loved *the world*, that he gave his Son;" but, 'God 'ſo loved *his Son*, that he gave him the world.' For they will by no means allow, that the death of Chriſt *redeems us to God*. They peremptorily affirm, and inſiſt upon it, that God is not reconciled to ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt. Hear their words: 'It is not true, that 'God, being provoked againſt mankind, was reconciled 'by Jeſus Chriſt; for quite the contrary may be aſſerted. 'That is, God being appeaſed towards mankind, 'reconciles to himſelf, by Jeſus Chriſt, men who were 'provoked againſt him.' If, then, Jeſus does not reconcile us to God, does not make our peace with him; we might, for aught that appears to the contrary, have done tolerably well without him. For as to our natural averſion to God, he could eaſily have removed it, by the operation of his grace on our hearts, without the mediation of Chriſt. But as for Jeſus, being a mere man, he could not have expected, nor would have enjoyed, a ſupernatural glory and power, if he had not ſignalized his obedience by his death. The fruit, therefore, which we reap from his ſufferings, is very ſmall; but the benefits which he receives from them, are very great; becauſe it is in virtue of his obedience to death, that he becomes the head of men and angels. —'He, at the ſame time declares, how much he abhors 'thoſe ſins which muſt be expiated by his Son's blood; 'and what an averſion we alſo ought to have for them.' But if Chriſt be a mere man, or a mere creature, his death can have but little force to convince us, how much

ſin is the object of God's abhorrence. The inference, in this caſe, will rather be; There is no reaſon that we ſhould make any great ſcruple of committing ſin; ſeeing it may, with ſo much eaſe and at ſo ſmall an expence, be expiated: for the blood of *one* man is ſufficient to atone for the ſins of *millions*.

CHAPTER II.

The doctrine of our adverſaries deſtroys the idea which the Scriptures give us, of the Greatneſs of Goſpel-myſteries, and the Nature of true Faith.

AS the principles which we oppoſe, exceedingly depreciate the love of God and the compaſſion of Jeſus to ſinful men; ſo they are equally unfavourable and irreconcileable to what the Scripture ſays, about the *greatneſs* of goſpel-myſteries, and the *nature* of true faith. For, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man, who can underſtand the apoſtle when he ſays; "Without controverſy, GREAT "IS THE MYSTERY of godlineſs: GOD WAS MANI-"FEST IN THE FLESH, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of "angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in "the world, received up into glory?"

The myſtery of the incarnation, as we profeſs to believe it, is great and ſublime. Such it is, whether we conſider the ineffable union of the human nature with the Divine; or the marvellous condeſcenſion and love which are manifeſted by it; or the important conſequences of ſuch an union. But we do not, we cannot ſee, how the birth of a mere man, who is born in fleſh, becauſe he could not be born otherwiſe, can be reckoned *a great myſtery*.—To ſpeak accurately and to reaſon juſtly, on the hypotheſis of our oppoſers, we

ſhould rather look for myſteries in the *terms of Scripture*, than in the *objects of religion*. So that we ſhould not ſay, "Great is the myſtery of godlineſs;" but, Great is the myſtery of the *language* which is uſed by the apoſtles. For the chief difficulties found in our divinity, lie in the *objects* of it; whereas thoſe which principally affect their ſcheme, lie in the *terms* of Scripture.—But, as the Holy Scriptures were intended by a gracious God, to be the rule of faith and practice to the moſt illiterate; its *language* ought not to be the chief ſource of difficulties. Yet, as the *objects* of the goſpel are ſublime and incomprehenſible, it is no wonder if they occaſion the principal part of that obſcurity which we find in the Sacred Volume.

Let us now conſider this paſſage a little more attentively. By the *myſtery of godlineſs*, we muſt here underſtand, the doctrine of the goſpel. This is evident from the following enumeration of particulars, which conſtitute the great ſubject of the goſpel-miniſtry. "God "was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen "of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in "the world, received up into glory."—Now I demand of thoſe who believe that Jeſus Chriſt is a mere man by nature, what is the meaning of theſe words; "God "was manifeſt in the fleſh?" If it be this, 'The man 'Jeſus converſed among men;' the myſtery, certainly, is not great. It is, indeed, ſurpriſing, that Enoch and Elijah were tranſlated into heaven, and that Chriſt was received up into glory; becauſe heaven is not, naturally, a place for bodies: but that a mere man was ſeen upon earth, and converſed among other men, was never wondered at by any.—Beſides, who does not perceive that theſe words, "God was manifeſt in the fleſh;" imply a diſtinction, point out an oppoſition, between *God*, whom we cannot ſee; and *a body*, which we can ſee—between God, who is *ſpiritual;* and fleſh, which is *ſenſible?* But what will become of this oppoſition,

and of the reality of this myſtery, if the true God was not manifeſt in the fleſh?

'Jeſus Chriſt, they will ſay, though a mere man by 'nature, is called GOD, becauſe he repreſents Him.'—But will this juſtify the expreſſions before us? Kings are called *gods*, becauſe they, in ſome ſenſe, repreſent God; yet whoever ſaid of a ſovereign prince, 'Without 'controverſy, *great is the myſtery of royalty;* God was 'manifeſt in the fleſh?'—The gentlemen with whom we contend are not aware, that they make a ridiculous match of *real* fleſh and a *true* manifeſtation, with a *metaphorical* God: whereas they ſhould unite one that is *properly* called God, with real fleſh and a true manifeſtation. For that which makes, I will not ſay, the *greatneſs* of the myſtery, but the *truth* of it, is, *the oppoſition* implied, between what is ſignified by the term *God*, and what is intended by the word *fleſh*. Now there is an oppoſition between fleſh, and one that is properly called God; but there is none at all between a *metaphorical* God, and *real* fleſh.—In what, then, does the greatneſs of this myſtery conſiſt; "God was "manifeſt in the fleſh?"

Perhaps they may anſwer, 'In the glory of Divine 'power, with which Chriſt was inveſted when he con-'verſed upon earth; which appeared in ſuch miracles 'and in ſo great a number, that it ſeemed as if God 'himſelf was come down to inhabit fleſh.'—But if ſo, the myſtery of the goſpel has nothing in it more ſurpriſing than that of the law; and we may find, in Moſes, as well as in Jeſus Chriſt, "God manifeſt in the fleſh." For Moſes appeared inveſted with a power, which acted on all the parts of nature, as if he had been the Lord of the world.—And did not the apoſtles work miracles? Yes; and greater, in ſome reſpects, than thoſe of their Divine Maſter, in purſuance of his own promiſe. The glory of God's power, therefore, was manifeſt in them. Yet, in what page of the New Teſtament is it

ſaid of any apoſtle; "God was manifeſt in the fleſh?" Further: Either the miracles of Chriſt ſhewed that the Divine power reſided in him, as in its *original;* and then our oppoſers muſt acknowledge that he is the true God: or they were the effects of a *derived* power, and ſo God himſelf performed them by his miniſtry and at his requeſt; which is true of the apoſtles: and ſo we may ſay of them, as well as of Chriſt; "Great is the "myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh."

But in what conſiſts the greatneſs of the myſtery, thus underſtood? Is it ſo uncommon, is it ſo aſtoniſhing, that God ſhould exert and diſplay his power, on important occaſions, and for his own glory, at the requeſt of a prophet, or of an apoſtle? Would it have been proper to ſay, when Elijah made fire to deſcend from heaven, to confound the impiety of Baal's worſhippers, "God "was manifeſt in the fleſh?"—Certainly, as theſe expreſſions are ſo ſingular and ſo emphatical, and as they were unknown before the incarnation; they muſt refer to a very wonderful object, and a very myſterious fact—a moſt aſtoniſhing and important fact, which had no exiſtence till "the Word was made fleſh." For, as language is adapted to the objects it repreſents, the ſingularity of expreſſions indicates, if the writer be honeſt and wiſe, a ſingularity in the object which is repreſented by them. As the language of the law would have appeared new and extraordinary to the ancient Gentiles, ſo would the language of the goſpel to them that lived under the law; becauſe the objects of the law are very different from thoſe of nature, and the objects of the goſpel from thoſe of the law. What, then, ſhall we think of theſe new and uncommon expreſſions, "God "was manifeſt in the fleſh;" if they do not ſignify a new and wonderful object, unknown to nature, unknown to the law?

The interpretation which our adverſaries put upon this paſſage, is inconſiſtent with the language of the apoſtle. For, according to him, GOD is manifeſted,

or appears, in flesh; but, according to them, *flesh* is manifested, or appears, to be God; the term flesh, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, frequently signifying the human nature. Socinus teaches, that he who is by nature flesh, is exalted so as to be called GOD; because he represents God in a wonderful manner: so that we have flesh first, and then a manifestation, or representation, of God. But Paul informs us, that he who was God appears in flesh: consequently, he suggests the idea of GOD, prior to that of *manifestation in the flesh*. This is the first and most natural impression of his words.

When the prophet gives that exalted character, IMMANUEL, to Jesus Christ; we immediately conceive of him as possessed of such perfections as cannot belong to a mere man. For so high a title was never given, by the Holy Spirit, to any prophet, or apostle. It is evidently above their state and dignity. And yet, perhaps, our argument from it might not be quite conclusive, if it were the only sublime title which the Scripture gives him. But when we hear an apostle call him, "GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;" the two characters illustrate each other, and we are taught to consider them both in the highest sense the words will bear. To answer the natural import of the former, the true God must be really *with us*: to correspond with the sense of the latter, the true God must be *incarnate*.

Jesus Christ, according to us, is God and man. He existed, not only before he was born of the virgin, but also before Abraham. He was, in the beginning, with God; he was God, and "was manifest in the "flesh," having assumed our nature. "He was justified "in the Spirit;" having sent the Holy Ghost, to vindicate his character from every unrighteous charge; to assert the efficacy of his death, and the truth of his resurrection. "Seen of angels;" at his birth, in his agony, and in his triumph. "Preached upto the

"Gentiles;" with great ſucceſs. "Believed on in "the world;" notwithſtanding the reproach under which the doctrine of the croſs lay. "And received "up into glory;" in the preſence of a great number of his diſciples, where he ever lives to make interceſſion for his people. And now, what difficulty is there in all this? This is the goſpel which we have received from the beginning.—According to the Socinians, Jeſus Chriſt is, by nature, a mere man; but is highly exalted for his obedience; ſo exalted, as to be called GOD. Now, in a mere man, I find but three things; a body, a ſoul, and the compound reſulting from the union of both. I demand, therefore, which of theſe was manifeſted in the fleſh? Not the *ſoul;* for it would be abſurd to call the ſoul of Jeſus, GOD: and equally ſo, to talk of its being manifeſted in the fleſh. Beſides, we are ſpeaking of a ſubject that was "received up into "glory;" which is affirmed, not leſs of the body, than it is of the ſoul. Nor is it the *body* of Jeſus Chriſt that was manifeſted in fleſh. For it is ridiculous to ſay, that fleſh is manifeſted in fleſh. Nor was the whole *compound*, or the entire man, manifeſted in the fleſh; for this compound is only the body and ſoul united.

If the queſtion were about a *quality*, it might be ſaid, That the power, or wiſdom, or holineſs, or authority of God, was manifeſted in the fleſh. But it is about a *perſon;* for thoſe words, "received up into glory," can be underſtood of no other. This perſon, therefore, muſt be either human, or Divine. Not the *latter;* for, according to our oppoſers, there is none but the Father. He muſt, conſequently, be the *former*. But a human perſon is a man: a man, therefore, was manifeſt in the fleſh. But can it be ſaid, without the greateſt abſurdity, that a man, conſiſting of a body and ſoul united, is manifeſt in fleſh? It cannot be denied, if Chriſt be a mere man, that the ſame nature was thus manifeſted, which was afterwards received up into glory; for our opponents will not allow that he has two natures. His

human nature, consequently, must have been manifested in the flesh; the very thought of which is big with absurdity.

But the tenets of our adversaries not only militate against the mystery of God's manifestation in the flesh; for they destroy *all* the mysteries at once, by removing whatever is difficult in religion.—The doctrine of the cross, as represented in the New Testament, has some things in it which are sublime and wonderful, difficult and incomprehensible; things which are contrary to the dictates of depraved reason, and to our natural prejudices. Hence it is called by one who was thoroughly acquainted with it; "A stumbling block to the Jews, and foolish-"ness to the Greeks." But what is there mysterious and incomprehensible in the cross of Christ, if he be a mere man? Did the Jews never see a man, who was acceptable to God, persecuted by the wicked? Did the servants of God never suffer death, to signalize their zeal, or to confirm the truth? If there be any mystery in the cross of Christ, it must be, either because he is a *righteous* man who suffers; or a *prophet;* or *the Son of God.* Not the *first;* for neither Jews nor Gentiles can look upon the death of an innocent man, under the power of his persecutors, as a new, or a strange thing. Not the *second;* for many prophets had been seen to die for the truth. Nor, according to our adversaries, can it be the *last;* for, if we believe them, he is the Son of God only by a metaphor: or, at most, as Adam was in his first state; having been formed immediately by the power of God, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

Paul speaks of "the foolishness of preaching, by "which God saves them that believe." The gospel is called *foolishness*, because it contains such things as appear incredible, and really are incomprehensible. But what is there of this kind, in the gospel, if the system of our opposers be scriptural? For they remove, or pretend to remove, all the principal difficulties out of

the way. Is not this a ſtrong preſumption that their goſpel, and their chriſtianity, are very different from thoſe which Paul preached and profeſſed?—Common ſenſe and a moderate ſhare of impartiality muſt, ſurely, allow, that there are more difficulties and greater obſcurity in thoſe objects which the goſpel reveals, than in thoſe preſented to us in the works of creation. And yet, if the hypotheſis which we oppoſe be admitted, there are more myſteries in the ſmalleſt inſect, in a ſpire of graſs, or in a grain of ſand, than in all the Chriſtian religion.—There were many things under the ancient Jewiſh œconomy that were grand, ſublime, and myſterious; yet they are not denominated *myſteries*, by the Holy Spirit, as thoſe under the goſpel-diſpenſation are. Nor were the objects of the law ever ſaid to be *fooliſhneſs*, on account of their being contrary to human prejudices; and yet, if our opponents be in the right, there were greater myſteries under the law, than any we have under the goſpel. God, for inſtance, appearing in the burning-buſh, was a greater myſtery, than "God manifeſted "in the fleſh."

The hypotheſis which we oppoſe, ſuperſedes the neceſſity and deſtroys the nature of *true faith:* the nature and excellence of which conſiſt, in receiving ſuch truths as lie beyond the powers of reaſon to diſcover; ſuch truths, as we could not receive, but upon the teſtimony of God who reveals them. Faith and ſight are different things. By the *latter* we receive ſuch truths as have a natural relation to our notions and light; by the *former*, ſuch as are contrary to our prejudices, on the bare authority of God in the Scriptures. Whereas this diſtinction is utterly deſtroyed, if the goſpel reveal no objects, if the Chriſtian religion contain no truths, but ſuch as are level to our capacities, and as agreeable to them as natural truths. But we ſhall have occaſion to reſume the conſideration of theſe things hereafter.

CHAPTER III.

The hypotheſis of our adverſaries deprives JESUS CHRIST of his higheſt honour; by making him poſſeſs thoſe Titles in a metaphorical ſenſe, which the Scripture applies to him in one that is proper. This proved by two inſtances.

GREATLY diverſified and truly ſublime are the titles of honour and grace, that are given by the Holy Spirit to the great Redeemer; but which, on the principles of our adverſaries, have little ſignificancy in them. I ſhall here make choice of two, as a ſpecimen: one of which is moſt ſtrongly adapted to expreſs his perſonal dignity and eſſential glory; the other, his grace and work as our Mediator. The titles I mean are, THE SON OF GOD, and THE SAVIOUR; both which are frequently applied to him in the Scripture.

Jeſus Chriſt, it is evident, is frequently and emphatically called, "The *Son* of God—His *own* Son—The "*begotten* of the Father—His *only begotten* Son—And, "the Son of the Father *in truth and love.*"—It muſt, therefore, be allowed, that God has a Son, who is, in the moſt emphatical ſenſe, his OWN; who is his Son in a higher ſenſe, than thoſe who are ſo called in virtue of adoption. It muſt alſo be acknowledged, that they who are the children of God by adoption, have a claim to the character of *ſons* in a ſtronger ſenſe, than they who are ſo called only by a metaphor.

But our opponents invert this order. For, according to them, Chriſt cannot be called THE SON OF GOD, but only by a figure: and, on the other hand, believers are the ſons of God by adoption, though they be ſo only in Jeſus Chriſt. But how can a metaphorical ſon, be more truly a ſon, than adopted ſons? And how can adopted ſons owe their adoption to a metaphorical ſon?—For, either Chriſt is himſelf adopted by the Father,

or he is not. If the *former*, how comes it that the Holy Spirit, though he often ſpeaks of the adoption of believers, ſhould never ſay a word of his adoption? Why is this language unknown to the Bible; 'God has 'adopted his Son, Jeſus Chriſt?' and ſo unknown, that it would be looked upon as blaſphemous. If the *latter*, he is only a metaphorical ſon: for he is not ſo by nature; our adverſaries cannot bear the expreſſion. Nor is he ſo by adoption; for the language of Scripture does not allow the thought. It follows, therefore, that he is ſo only by a metaphor; and, conſequently, the ſonſhip of believers is of a ſuperior kind to that of Jeſus Chriſt.

The title, "Sons of God," which believers bear, has ever been juſtly eſteemed an eminent proof of their intereſt in the Father's love. It is a glorious and wonderful fruit of Divine grace, and as ſuch they acknowledge it with gratitude and joy. But the character, Son, which Jeſus bears, ought never to be conſidered in that light. For it cannot be ſaid, He is the Son of God, becauſe God *loves* him; but, God loves him becauſe he is *his Son*. The beloved diſciple ſays, "Behold, what "manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, "that we ſhould be called the ſons of God!" But we never hear any of the inſpired writers ſay, 'Behold, 'how God loves Jeſus Chriſt, that he ſhould call him 'his Son!' The reaſon is, the exalted character is foreign and accidental to us; but proper and eſſential to him. In reſpect of us, it is matter of mere favour; in regard of him, it is his eternal right.

Jeſus, the Son of God, is ſaid to be "in the boſom "of the Father," and to "ſit at the right hand of God." In the *boſom* of the Father—At the *right hand* of God. Of theſe two characteriſtics, the former is more peculiar to the Son of God, as ſuch. It is a mark of ſuperior honour to be ſeated at the right hand; but of the greateſt affection to reſt on the boſom. And as it is more natural to love, than to honour, a Son; ſo, to be "in the boſom of the Father," is a ſituation more

peculiar to the Son of God, as such, than that of sitting at his right hand.—But we shall have occasion, when answering the objections of our opposers, in the concluding Section of this work, to consider the Sonship of Jesus Christ more at large. I proceed, therefore, and briefly observe,

That the character, SAVIOUR, so frequently and so distinguishingly given to Jesus Christ, entirely loses its gracious and glorious import, on the principles of our opponents. For if he be a mere man; if the whole which he did for us be included, in preaching the gospel, in suffering persecution and death, to set us an example of patience and to confirm the truth which he taught; he has done but little more for us than the apostles and martyrs themselves. On this supposition it is hard to say, what benefit any of the human race, who died before he appeared in the world, could receive from his undertaking. If these were the only, or the principal benefits we receive from him, we may venture to assert, that Moses was more truly the Saviour of the Israelites, than Jesus Christ is of mankind. For Moses *himself* did that, which Christ does principally by his *apostles*. The former *delivered* the chosen tribes out of slavery; the latter is only *called* a deliverer, while he leaves us to save ourselves. Moses, indeed, did not suffer death as Christ did; but then, as to a real and proper atonement, or as a price of redemption, the death of Jesus is as unprofitable to us, as the death of that ancient lawgiver would have been to the posterity of Jacob. But this particular must be the subject of the next Chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

According to the sentiments of our adversaries, the Death of CHRIST has no real Usefulness in it.

THEY who are acquainted with the gospel of divine grace cannot but know, that the death of Christ is not only useful, but absolutely necessary to our salvation. His vicarious obedience and atoning death, are the grand subject of the ministry of reconciliation. Hence the determination of Paul, "to know nothing "but Jesus Christ and him crucified;" and to glory only in the cross of his crucified Lord.

This interesting truth was clearly taught by the ancient prophets. Witness that famous oracle, in the fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah; which contains so many illustrious characteristics of the Messiah, depending upon his death; and that animated description of his sufferings and sorrows, in the twenty-second Psalm.—John the Baptist no sooner sees Jesus than he points him out, as an atoning sacrifice. "Behold," says that venerable teacher, "behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh "away the sin of the world!"—Christ himself, when discoursing familiarly with his disciples, frequently foretels his own death. And when one of his apostles endeavours to dissuade him from going up to Jerusalem there to suffer, he sharply rebukes him for it: of such importance was it, in his esteem, to the salvation of man and the glory of God. And when he was expiring on the cross he cried, with his last breath, "IT IS FINISHED;" plainly implying, that his death is of the last importance; that his death comprehends all.

The propitiatory death of our great High-priest was foretold in the earliest promises, and prefigured in the ancient types. The dying Jesus was represented by the

paſchal-lamb; which was ſacrificed in Egypt, inſtead of the firſt born of the Iſraelites; the blood of which, being ſprinkled on the door-poſts of their houſes, ſecured them from the ſword of the deſtroying angel. For, as the paſchal-lamb ranſomed the firſt-born, being ſacrificed for them; ſo Jeſus delivers believers from the ſword of Divine juſtice, by dying in their ſtead. It is neceſſary, however, to be obſerved, that as thoſe things which were but imperfectly repreſented under the law, are fully accompliſhed under the goſpel; there is this difference between the type and the antitype: The former, though not an equivalent for the life of a man, was accepted of God; becauſe the deſign then was, not to *make* ſatisfaction to God's juſtice; but only to *prefigure* that ſacrifice which was to make a full ſatisfaction. But Chriſt is a worthy ranſom; a ſubſtitute, whom we need not fear being rejected, as inferior to thoſe for whom he dies. He is, therefore, called, "The Lamb of God." He is THE LAMB, by way of excellence; the only lamb that can atone for our ſins and ranſom our ſouls. Such is the import of the phraſe, according to the ſtyle of inſpiration; in which it is common to add the Divine name to any thing that is peculiarly excellent, great, or remarkable. As, for inſtance; "The mountains of God; the "cedars of God; the garden of God;" and here, "The Lamb of God;"—Our dying Surety was repreſented by the ſcape-goat, on the great day of expiation. To fulfil this type, therefore, he muſt bear our ſins; he muſt be anathema; he muſt be made a curſe for us. For if not, why was he repreſented by this goat? What was there, in any other view, common between them?—I might, on this occaſion, multiply particulars out of the Jewiſh ritual, but theſe may ſuffice.

That the application we make of theſe ancient types is not fanciful and forced, the ſacred penmen of the New Teſtament abundantly ſhew. They unite in aſſuring us, That "Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for "us—That he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away

" the ſin of the world—That he himſelf bare our ſins
" in his own body on the tree—That he was made ſin
" for us—That he was made a curſe for us—That he
" gave his life a ranſom for many—That he was
" delivered for our offences—That he hath reconciled
" and redeemed us to God by his blood—That his
" blood purges the conſcience from dead works, and
" cleanſeth from all ſin."—Theſe declarations are perfectly conformable to the language of prophecy, in which it is ſaid; " The Lord hath laid on him the
" iniquity of us all—He ſhall make his ſoul an offering
" for ſin—The Meſſiah ſhall be cut off, but not for
" himſelf—For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he
" ſtricken—He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he
" was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our
" peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are
" healed,"—What, now, can we infer from theſe, and a multitude of ſimilar paſſages in the Book of God, but that the death of Chriſt was *vicarious*; that he died, not only for *our good*, but in *our ſtead*; and that his death has procured for us, not ſome trifling benefit only, but remiſſion of ſins and eternal life? being a full ſatisfaction to the demands of a violated law, and the claims of eternal juſtice.

But, notwithſtanding all this, if Jeſus be a mere creature, the doctrine of the ſatisfaction cannot be defended. Of this the Socinians are aware, and therefore they renounce it; even though it is an article in the Chriſtian faith of the greateſt importance; an article, ſo often repeated, ſo variouſly and ſo emphatically expreſſed in Scripture, that we might, with equal reaſon, renounce Revelation itſelf, as call it in queſtion. But let us now inquire, what advantage we have by the death of Chriſt, according to our opponents.

They tell us, 'That the blood of Chriſt confirms 'the new covenant, which God makes with mankind 'through him.'—But if his death ſerve only to confirm the covenant, in their ſenſe of the expreſſions, there is

little reaſon to conſider it as the principal object of our believing regards. For of all the events relating to Jeſus Chriſt, this is the leaſt adapted to confirm the covenant. If we conſider him as dying in our ſtead, and as ſuſtaining the puniſhment deſerved by our ſins; there can be no doubt but his death aſſures us of the love of God, and ratifies his covenant of grace: but, on their hypotheſis, it is not fitted to anſwer any ſuch deſign; his life, at leaſt, is much better adapted to that purpoſe. For thoſe multiplied and ſhining miracles which he wrought encourage our faith in him, much more than the ſorrows and pangs of his death.—'But though his 'miracles are better calculated to aſſure us of his power; 'yet his death is the greateſt evidence of his love, and 'beſt fitted to perſuade us of it.' To perſuade us of his love! But how ſhould an unprofitable death be ſo well adapted to perſuade us of his love? Was it ever known that a wiſe man laid down his life for no other end, but to convince another how much he loved him? Beſides, on the principles of our adverſaries, the death of Chriſt is more beneficial to himſelf than it is to us, as we have before proved.

But in what reſpect does the death of Jeſus confirm the covenant? Is it on the part of *man*, or on the part of *God?* Not the *former*, I preſume; it muſt, therefore, be the *latter;* but then it is on our principles, not on theirs. That is, the death of Chriſt gives us the higheſt aſſurance that God will perform his gracious promiſes to the utmoſt. This we allow; in this we rejoice, as a moſt comfortable and certain truth; becauſe we conſider the death of the incarnate Son, as the greateſt poſſible evidence of the Father's love to our ſouls. Hence we conclude, that as God has done us this wonderful kindneſs, he will do us every other that he has promiſed; this being ſuch a favour, as is greater than any, greater than all the reſt. If it were not ſo, it would by no means follow, that becauſe he has delivered up Jeſus to death, he will give us eternal

life. For though it is highly probable, that he who does a greater kindness will do a less; yet it is far from being certain, that he who does a less will also do a greater. If Jesus be a mere man, and if his death be not a satisfaction to Divine justice; his life cannot be so valuable as the eternal happiness of those he redeems; and, consequently, the gift of the former cannot assure us that we shall have the latter.

'The death of Christ is also of use to confirm his 'doctrine.'—Suppose it be, yet it cannot be the *grand* use of it; because the Scriptures never mention it as such, where the benefits resulting from it are enumerated. Besides, if this were its principal use, it would be of much less advantage to us than his life; the latter being abundantly better adapted to confirm his doctrine. His life is all glorious with great, beneficent, astonishing works, which prove that the doctrine he teaches is truly Divine; because Heaven, by a thousand miraculous facts, gives him an unsuspected testimony. But though his death plainly shews, that he *sincerely believes* his doctrine to be Divine; yet, separately considered, it does not prove that it *is so* in reality. Nor is he the only person who confirmed the truths which he taught, by suffering a violent death. In this respect there was nothing in his death but what was common to prophets, apostles, and martyrs.—Again; To whom should the death of Christ confirm the truth of his doctrine? to his enemies or his friends? Not his *enemies;* for the greatest and most dreadful part of his sufferings was unobserved by them. They neither beheld his bloody agony in the garden, nor knew the cause of his bitter cry on the cross. And as to those sufferings which did come under their notice, they looked upon them as the just reward of his supposed blasphemy.—Not his *friends;* for his death was considered by them in a very different point of light. So far from *confirming*, that it *staggered* their faith in his doctrine; and they cried out, "We trusted "that it had been he which should have redeemed

"Israel." Nay, were we to consider the death of Christ, without any reference to an atonement for sin, to his preceding miracles, and subsequent resurrection; it would be so far from confirming his doctrine, that it would prove the strongest confutation of it that malice itself could desire.

But what doctrine is the death of Christ supposed to confirm? Is it that of *forgiveness* with God? That our offended Sovereign will *pardon sinners?* Far, very far from it, on the principles of our opposers. For by what mode of argumentation shall we infer, that because a *perfectly innocent* and righteous person was treated with such severity, by the eternal God; that he will exercise his pardoning mercy on *criminals*, who deserve to perish? The natural, the unavoidable inference, is of a contrary kind. For if such things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry! If judgment began with the holy Jesus, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear! If God spared not his own Son, how much less will he spare his enemies! How should thinking men believe Jesus when he tells them, that God will pity and pardon sinners; while they behold their Maker treating the holy Teacher himself with such alarming severity? The death of Christ, therefore, detached from a consideration of its being satisfactory to the claims of Divine justice, or an atonement for sin; is so far from being a source of hope to the guilty, that it is calculated to raise in their breasts the most awful apprehensions, and to sink them in utter despair.

'In the death of Christ we have an admirable example 'of patience'—Granted; but then it is on our principles, not on those of our opponents. He has given such an example of patience as never had, nor ever will have its equal; for he not only endured the fierce torments of crucifixion, but sustained, which was infinitely more dreadful, the wrath of God. "He was made sin—"he was made a curse for us." Appearing as our substitute, the sword of eternal justice awoke upon him,

and he was deprived, for a season, of his Father's presence; a privation the more keenly sensible, because his love to the Father was fervent, constant, perfect. Yes, Jesus, the dear, the adorable Jesus, underwent those pains and sorrows, those agonies and horrors, which are included in the penal sanction of the law, and which the justice of God inflicts, when satisfaction for sin is required. Who, then, who can forbear to wonder at his patience and fortitude?

But the doctrine of our opponents, gives us a very different view of our suffering Lord. For if he suffered only in their sense, there have been much greater examples of patience and fortitude in multitudes of martyrs. Many of those faithful witnesses suffered for a much longer time, and under a greater variety of keener torments; and yet, instead of being overwhelmed with sorrow, were transported with joy. This is a certain fact, but quite astonishing and perfectly unaccountable, on the hypothesis which we oppose. It shocks reason and staggers faith; it nonplusses imagination and glares on the mind as an impious absurdity. What, shall He who is perfect, shall the Lion of the tribe of Judah, be terrified at the approach of death; a death in which he suffers no sensations of Divine vengeance, nor any bitterness of the Divine curse denounced against sin; while his servants, who have all their strength and consolation from him, triumph in the midst of torments! What, shall he be seized with agonizing sorrows, while they are transported with joy! What, shall he sweat blood at the approach of death, while they behold a Divine hand wiping off their blood and sweat, for as to tears they do not shed one! He complains that God has forsaken him, while they rejoice that everlasting arms embrace and support them!—What could be the reason of this astonishing difference? It must have been, either on the part of God, or on that of second causes, or on that of the suffering person. It was not on the part of *second causes;* for the torments of the martyrs

were, I will not say *equal* in duration and degree, but in many instances greatly *superior*. Nor on the part of the *suffering person;* because Christ had incomparably more strength and holiness than the martyrs. It must then have been on the part of *God*, who ministered abundantly more consolation to the martyrs than he did to Jesus Christ. But why so, if he did not look upon him as the sinner's substitute? Considered as the Son of God, he was always, even when he hung on the cross, the object of his Father's infinite love: consequently, if God had viewed him under that character only, he would, in the time of his sufferings, have been a partaker of joys vastly superior to those which the martyrs possessed.

It may, perhaps, be said, 'Christ was perfectly holy 'and entirely innocent when he suffered death; not so 'the martyrs.'—They were, however, innocent with respect to the cause for which they suffered. Besides, the sense of a man's innocence does not use to aggravate his sufferings, but rather to support and comfort him under them. This Jesus himself declares, when he says; "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness "sake."—Equally unavailing would it be to say, 'Jesus 'was the first in suffering such afflictions; and they who 'set the example generally suffer most.' For it is not fact that he was the first martyr. He himself tells us, that the prophets were persecuted before him; and encourages his disciples, by this very consideration. And though this might serve to justify a small difference, between a number of sufferers; yet it cannot possibly account for that amazing disparity which is found, if we only consider external things, between the fortitude of Christ and that of the martyrs.—It was not long after the death of Jesus that Stephen was stoned. The great number of martyrs, therefore, whom he had seen die for the truth, could not have raised his patience and courage to that heroical pitch, which he discovered on the occasion. Yet those virtues shone with a much

brighter luſtre in him, than they did in his dying Maſter, if we only regard outward appearances. The latter is immerſed in ſorrow; the former is elevated with joy. And, when ſurrounded by his cruel enemies, he cried out; "Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the Son "of man ſtanding on the right hand of God!" One is afflicted beyond meaſure in his thoughts of God, and ſays; "My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken "me?" The other is tranſported with gladneſs, at the ſight of his aſcended Lord; and the joy which ſparkles in his eyes and ſhines in his countenance, renders his face like that of an angel. Who, now, on the Socinian hypotheſis, can account for this aſtoniſhing difference.

Some, indeed, have ſuppoſed, 'That the body of 'Chriſt, being formed immediately by the Holy Ghoſt, 'was more ſenſible of pain than the bodies of other 'men.'—But who is able to prove that a body muſt be more ſenſible of pain, becauſe it was formed by the Holy Spirit, and is the reſidence of perfect holineſs? Beſides, Jeſus did not ſuffer in his body, when he was in the garden of Gethſemane. His ſufferings were then of a mental kind; yet ſo great were they that he ſweat blood. Nay, he expreſsly declared, that his ſoul was ſorrowful, exceeding ſorrowful, ſorrowful even unto death; when no human hand was upon him, when no human enemy was near him, and before he ſuffered the leaſt pain in his body, except what was occaſioned by the agonies of his mind. The frowns of his Father, who was then aſſerting the rights of his violated law, were chiefly ſenſible to him through the whole of his paſſion. Theſe penetrated his very ſoul. It evidently appears, from the hiſtory of his ſufferings, that his bodily pains did not ruffle the temper of his mind. He had as much command of himſelf, in that reſpect, when he hung on the croſs, as when in familiar converſe with his diſciples. Witneſs that ſaying to his mother, "Woman, behold thy Son!" and to the beloved diſciple, "Son, behold thy mother!" Witneſs

alſo his glorious promiſe to the penitent thief; "Verily "I ſay unto thee, this day ſhalt thou be with me in "paradiſe."—To as little purpoſe would it be to ſuppoſe, 'That his overwhelming ſorrows were occaſioned by 'the baſe ingratitude of the Jews.' For, to publiſh the word of life to ungrateful men, and to be recompenſed with perſecution and death, were common to him with multitudes of martyrs. Beſides, this was far from being the firſt time that he experienced the ingratitude of his nation. Nay, he very well knew, long before, that this ingratitude would run ſo high as to be the death of him; and of this he had informed his diſciples. The ingratitude of the Jews might add to his ſorrow; but it could not be the principal cauſe of his anguiſh, neither in the garden, nor on the croſs. Unleſs, therefore, we would make another goſpel, we muſt acknowledge, that the deſertion of his Father lay neareſt his heart. He conſidered the time of his paſſion, as "the hour and power of darkneſs;" when inſulting tongues and violent hands, the rage of hell and the wrath of God, were all united to plunge him deep in accumulated and conſummate woe.—Once more; If the approbation of God uſually comfort them that ſuffer in a righteous cauſe, how came it to paſs that Chriſt was not relieved by it? And if the certainty of poſſeſſing an eternal and bleſſed life, cauſed the martyrs to ſhed their blood with joy; ſhould not the certainty which Jeſus had, not only of living in conſummate happineſs for ever, but alſo of making others everlaſtingly bleſſed, fill him with unſpeakable joy? What, ſhall men who are accuſtomed to love the earth, rejoice to leave it; while Jeſus Chriſt, who is perfectly free from every ſordid and ſinful paſſion; while He who is the perfect pattern of every moral excellence, is ſeized with a thouſand mortal terrors, juſt as he is going to heaven! This is, on the Socinian principles, abſurd to imagine; impoſſible to be true.

To conclude: If Jesus died for us only in the sense of our adversaries, his death and that of the martyrs stand much on a level, in point of advantage to us. And if so, it is unaccountably strange that the Holy Ghost should put such a difference between the one and the other. "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye "baptized in the name of Paul?". We were not, indeed, *baptized* in the name of that apostle; but, if the doctrine of Socinus be true, Paul and Jesus must have *died for us* in the same sense, and for the same end.

CHAPTER V.

The sentiments of our adversaries render the language of Scripture obscure and false, absurd and impious.

THIS is the last of those propositions which we engaged to prove in this Section; and the principal mean to shew, That Christ and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error, if the sentiments of our opposers be true.

Those passages of Scripture which we shall produce, on this occasion, are such as refer, either to the original state of Jesus Christ, or to his pre-existence, or such as reveal his eternal Divinity; of all which in their order.

Of the *first* sort are the following. "What and if "ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he was "before?—I am the bread which came down from "heaven—No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he "that came down from heaven—He that cometh from "above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, "and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven "is above all—The first man is of the earth, earthy: "the second man is the Lord from heaven—I came down

"from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him "that sent me—I came forth from the Father, and am "come into the world: again, I leave the world, and "go to the Father—I proceeded forth, and came from "God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me— "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also "descended first, into the lower parts of the earth?"

In these, and similar passages, as they are explained by our opponents, we can discern neither wisdom nor propriety, neither truth nor common sense, but quite the reverse. For all that we find in Jesus Christ, considered as a mere man, is, that he had a soul created immediately by the power of God; that his body was formed in the womb, by the agency of the Divine Spirit; that he received, in an extraordinary manner, those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were necessary to discharge the work of his ministry; and that he was invested with his office and sent of God to perform it among men. But if Jesus may be said, "To have proceeded from "God; to have come down from heaven, and to have "been with God, in the beginning;" because his soul was created immediately by the power of God; the same things may be affirmed of men in general. For every man has a spirit that returns to God who gave it. Thus it might be said of any man, What and if ye see him ascend where he was before? And each might say of himself, I came down from heaven—I proceeded from the Father, and came into the world; and now I leave the world and go to the Father. And so every one might have a share in those privileges and honours, which have been always considered as peculiar to Jesus Christ.—And though the body of Christ was formed by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, yet that is far from being a sufficient reason for these and similar expressions; "I came down from heaven—I came "from God." For Adam's body was formed immediately by the hand of God; and yet the Scripture is far from speaking of our great progenitor after this manner;

so far from it, that the language used is of a directly contrary signification. For the Spirit of inspiration, speaking of Adam, says; "The first man is of the earth, "earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

'Jesus Christ, it will be said, was not only conceived 'in a Divine manner, but was also replenished with the 'gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; and in that respect 'he may be said to come from God, and to come down 'from heaven: because it is the work of God to raise 'up a man in a supernatural way, and to endue him with 'the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In much the same sense 'as when it is said, "Every good gift, and every "perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the "Father of lights." Or, as in that question, "The "baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" and in opposition to the meaning of those words, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, "sensual, devilish."—But these passages are far from being parallel, are very unsuitable on this occasion. For there is a vast difference between speaking thus of certain *qualities*, which are not susceptible of local motion; and, consequently, cannot be said, but in a figurative sense, to go or come, to descend or ascend; and speaking thus of a *person*, who may, in a proper sense, be said to descend or ascend. Besides, it is plain from all the circumstances of these texts, that the expressions adduced, as examples, ought to be understood in a metaphorical sense: whereas the very contrary is evident, in relation to those passages which we have just produced, in respect of Jesus Christ. For who does not see a local ascension, an ascension *properly* so called, in these words; "What "and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he "was before?" And if the word *ascend* be literal, must not the immediately following words, *where he was before*, be so too? When Jesus says, "I came forth "from the Father and am come into the world; again, "I leave the world and go to the Father;" who can seasonably doubt, whether he came from the Father and

came into the world, in the same sense in which he speaks of leaving the world and going to the Father? If, then, he left the world and went to his Father in a proper and literal sense, he must, in the same sense have come down from the Father.—Again: If they who receive the gifts of the Spirit, who are sent of God, and who are the peculiar work of his power, may be said to "come down from heaven;" nothing could be more just than to affirm it of the apostles. For they were endued with supernatural and wonderful gifts; they were divinely sent; and they, both in regard to their regeneration and their qualifications for the apostleship, were, in a particular manner, the work of God. Yet the Scripture never says, they came down from heaven. John the Baptist also, was holy, in several respects; and was, in various ways, the work of God; for he was holy from his mother's womb, filled with the Holy Ghost, raised up, in an extraordinary manner, and sent of God; yet the evangelists are so far from saying, "he came down from heaven," that they tell us he "was of the earth." For thus they represent the Messiah's harbinger speaking of his Lord and of himself: "He that cometh from above, is above all. He that "is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: "He that cometh from heaven, is above all."

The enemies of our Lord's Divinity, being unable to satisfy either themselves or others, endeavour to extricate themselves out of those difficulties with which they are pressed, by supposing and asserting; 'That 'Christ, before he entered on his public ministry, 'ascended into heaven; and, having received instructions 'relating to his important work, came down to perform 'the various duties of his office.' This they consider as the foundation of those various ways of speaking, by which Jesus is represented, as proceeding from the Father; as coming down from above; and as being the bread which came from heaven. All which is quickly said, and sooner imagined; but let us examine

this conjecture, and see whether it be not contrary to truth and probability.

Whence, then, had they this account? From any evangelist, or any of the inspired writers? If so, let them produce the passage. If Jesus did, indeed, ascend bodily into heaven, as they suppose, it was no small miracle; and, consequently, it ought not to rest on the bare assertion of our opponents. Nay, had it been a fact, it ought to have made a considerable figure in the evangelical history; which, nevertheless, is not the case. It must have been, however, of as much importance, as Elizabeth's visit to Mary; as the arrival of the eastern Magi; as the account of our Saviour's journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age; or of his temptation in the wilderness. It was, at least, as necessary to our edification, that the sacred historians should have informed us, of his being caught up into heaven, by the Spirit of God; as to represent him elevated by the devil, and placed on a pinnacle of the temple. It was, surely, of as much importance to tell us, that he had been for some time in heaven; as to inform us, that he sojourned at Nazareth. Was it necessary to mention the opening of the heavens, at his baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him? then, certainly, it could not have been impertinent to have told us, that he was taken bodily into heaven.

Our opponents will have the abode of Moses on mount Sinai, while God was instructing him for his future service; to be a type of this supposed rapture of Jesus Christ, and of his abode in heaven with a similar view. But they do not consider how improbable it is, that the type should be so exactly recorded in the history of the Old Testament; and that its accomplishment, which is of immensely greater importance to mankind, should lie hid under a vail of silence. To what principle can we attribute this omission, on such an interesting occasion, in historians who relate matters of much less consequence? For, next to three or four grand facts, such as the

death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Chriſt; there was no one event in the hiſtory of our Lord, of greater importance to us, or more to his honour, than that which is in queſtion before us. I do not except his transfiguration; an event which the evangeliſts relate with all its circumſtances. Becauſe it was much more honourable to Jeſus, and of much greater conſequence to us, for him to aſcend into heaven, to converſe familiarly with his Father; than to converſe with Moſes and Elijah, on the Mount of transfiguration.

What, then, can be ſaid to excuſe the ſilence of the evangeliſts, on this occaſion? Did they propoſe to relate only ſuch things as referred to the *humiliation* of Jeſus; and, on that account, omitted an event which ſeemed to regard his glorification? But this is contrary to plain fact. They relate, with great particularity, many glorious and wonderful circumſtances which attended the birth and life, the death and reſurrection of their Divine Maſter. What, then, can be ſaid, to juſtify this extraordinary, unnatural, and incomprehenſible ſilence?

But what neceſſity was there that Chriſt ſhould aſcend into heaven? for as the opinion of our oppoſers, in this reſpect, is not grounded on any report of the evangeliſts, they muſt needs eſtabliſh it on ſome kind of *neceſſity*. 'It was neceſſary, Socinus ſays, that Chriſt ſhould be 'conformable to Moſes; who was his type. As Moſes, 'therefore, was with God on the mount; ſo it was 'neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould be, for ſome time, with 'God in heaven. Beſides, it was neceſſary that Chriſt 'ſhould go up into heaven, to receive particular inſtruc-'tions, reſpecting the truths which he was to teach 'mankind.'—As to the latter of theſe aſſertions, it may be obſerved, that local motion contributes but little towards our being taught of God. The apoſtles were perfectly inſtructed in the truths of the goſpel, and in the myſteries of the kingdom of God; yet they were not taken up into heaven, in order to learn what they

should preach to mankind, or what they should write for the use of the church in succeeding ages. How, then, could such an ascension be necessary for Him who received the Spirit without measure; and who, being holy from his conception, astonished the Jewish doctors with his wisdom, when but twelve years of age? Nor did John the Baptist ascend into heaven to learn the will of God, or to receive qualifications for his office; yet, so soon as he saw Jesus approaching him, he exclaimed; "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh "away the sin of the world!" Which comprehensive words contain an epitome of gospel-truth. But why should the Master be at more pains to receive instruction than the servant?

'There was no necessity, it will be replied, only so 'far as it behoved Christ to be conformable to Moses, 'who was his type. For as the latter was a mediator 'between Jehovah and the Israelites; so the former 'between God and believers. As the one informed 'the seed of Jacob of God's design to deliver them out 'of Egyptian bondage; so the other was to reveal the 'merciful counsel of God, respecting the redemption 'of mankind from everlasting damnation.'—Is it not amazing that men of such celebrated parts and learning, should reason after this manner? If, then, I do but imagine, that there are such and such relations in the ancient types, I am fully warranted to make what additions I please to the evangelical history! I may, therefore, say, Jesus had an *impediment* in his speech, because Moses had: Jesus was a a *shepherd*, because Moses was.

To which it will be said, 'By no means. Because 'it is not what Moses was, or did, simply considered; 'but what he did, as a *type* that was to be accomplished 'in Christ. But he was with Jehovah on mount Sinai, 'as a mediator and as a type.'—But if it be allowable to over-stretch the relations which there are in the types, what is there that may not be maintained? Moses, for

inſtance, aſcended the mountain *twice*, to be inſtructed in the law and will of the Lord; muſt we, therefore, conclude, that Jeſus went up twice into heaven, on a ſimilar account? Moſes, when on the mount, *faſted* forty days and forty nights, and that once and again; muſt we from hence infer, that Chriſt went up into heaven a firſt and a ſecond time, and that he faſted twice, when there, for an equal ſpace of time? The former, coming down from the mount, *brake* the tables of the law; and, deſcending from it a ſecond time, brought other tables with him, which were preſerved; was there any thing ſimilar in the conduct of Jeſus? When Moſes came down from the mount, ſo great was the *luſtre* of his countenance that the Iſraelites could not ſteadily behold him, till he had put a vail on his face; but will any one ſay, that the countenance of Chriſt ſhone, when he came down from heaven, and that he alſo was obliged to vail his face, before his diſciples could converſe with him? None will pretend to carry the parallel ſo far, between the Jewiſh lawgiver and his glorious Antitype. Conſequently, as the relations of the types ought not to be carried to exceſs, it is unwarrantable, it is abſurd, to ground the truth of a ſuppoſed fact, which is otherwiſe unknown, on ſuch compariſons as may be juſtly eſteemed the flights of imagination.

But were we to admit the conjecture of our adverſaries, their cauſe would receive but little advantage from it; becauſe it would not be ſufficient to juſtify thoſe expreſſions which deſcribe our Lord as *coming down* from heaven. For ſuppoſing he did aſcend into heaven, yet he was there but for a ſhort ſpace of time: he did not aſcend thither, as to a place where he fixed his ordinary abode, that being peculiar to his ſecond aſcenſion. Why, then, ſhould the Scripture ſay, He was to aſcend "where he was before?" *Where he was before:* Can this be ſpoken of a tranſient abode in heaven for a few days? Paul was caught up to the third heaven;

but was it proper to say, at his death, His immortal spirit is gone where he was before? Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the solemn feasts; could it be said of him, the second time of his going thither, He is gone where he was before? Would not such language intimate, that he had been used to make *his abode* at that renowned city, and so convey a false idea? Or, could it be said of Moses, the second time he went up to the mount, He is gone up where he was before?—Besides, it is not common for the Scripture to say, Jesus *went up* to heaven; but, "he *came from* heaven; he *came down* "from heaven; he *came from* God; he *proceeded from* "the Father," and was to go to him, as he came from him. Which expressions plainly shew, that he came down from heaven, as from his natural place; not that he went up into heaven by a miracle, to be there only for a few days. So, in reference to Paul's rapture, the Holy Spirit does not say, He came from heaven; he came down from heaven; he came from God; though this was a fact: because it is not so much his *descent from* heaven, as his *ascension thither* that is the object of our admiration. According, therefore, to this peculiarity of our opponents, it would have been much more proper for the sacred writers to have told us repeatedly, that Jesus *went up* into heaven; than for them so frequently to say, he *came down* from heaven. For, if the former be a fact, the latter cannot be doubted; because we behold him on earth, preaching the word and performing miracles; but that he ascended to heaven, is what we did not know, and, therefore, should have been informed of it.—When the heroes of ancient Rome were honoured with a triumph, it was common to say, 'They *went up* to the capitol;' because that was the most remarkable thing in the whole procession. But they never thought of saying, with an emphasis; 'They 'came down from the capitol;' because their descent from it was far from being so considerable as their going up to it.—So of the Jews it used to be said, 'They *went*

'*up* to Jeruſalem every year, from all the parts of 'their country, to worſhip there.' This was neceſſary to be known: much more ſo, than that they *came down* every year from that metropolis, though the latter was equally true; becauſe it is not the principal thing, to which both Scripture and reaſon require that we ſhould attend. Thus, if Jeſus went up to heaven, and came down from thence, after having continued there a few days; it was of incomparably more importance to us, to be informed of his *aſcenſion*, than of his *deſcenſion*; and yet the Scripture ſpeaks frequently of the *latter*, not at all of the *former*.

Still further to confute the ungrounded conjecture and illuſtrate the point: Suppoſe we met with a ſtranger, who ſhould talk after this manner; 'I came from Japan, 'and I go to Japan. Ye ſhall ſoon ſee me return where 'I was before. I departed from Japan, and I landed 'in this country; not to do my own buſineſs, but the 'buſineſs of the king of Japan. Ye are of this country, 'but I am of Japan. I came from the king of Japan, 'and landed in this country; I alſo leave this country, 'and go to the king of Japan, for he ſent me. Now 'that I am to return thither, what is it but that I was 'ſent into this country? He who is of this country, 'ſpeaks as the men of this country; but a man who 'came from Japan, ſpeaks as one of that empire. 'None of you ever was at Japan, except myſelf who 'came from thence, and who reſide, or who am in 'Japan.'—Now I appeal to our adverſaries, and I take all mankind to witneſs, what is the natural impreſſion which theſe declarations ought to make on our minds. Do they naturally raiſe in our minds an idea, that he who ſpeaks thus is an *Europeau*, who has been at Japan a fortnight, or a month only, and is quickly to return thither? Or do they inform us, that he is a native of Japan who had long reſided there, and is ſpeedily to return to his own country? It muſt, certainly, be proper for ſuch an one to ſay, 'I came from Japan; I came

'forth from Japan; I am of Japan.' But as for an European, who had been there for a few days, or weeks only, he would say; 'I have been as far as Japan; 'I have been at Japan; I have seen Japan.'

Again: It is very observable, that the Scripture exalts Christ above all, because "he came from above." This is a pertinent and conclusive reason, if he came from heaven, as from his natural place; but is far from being so, if he only came down from thence, after having miraculously ascended thither. Or if conclusive, we may for the same reason assert, that Paul is *above all*; because he partook in the same honour, having been rapt up into the third heaven.—Nor does Jesus barely say, "I came down from heaven;" he also gives his reason for it. "I came, says the great Redeemer, not to "do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." He expressly gives the reason why he *came down* from heaven; but says not a word why he *went up thither*; which, on the principles of the Socinians, is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd. For it is as if Moses had said to the Israelites; 'I *came down* from the mount 'for such, or such a purpose;' without ever informing them that he *went up* thither and conversed with God. In such a case they might well have replied; 'As the 'mount was not the place of your abode, we are surprised at your ascending that eminence; but we do not 'wonder at your coming down. Tell us first why you 'went up; and then you may let us know, if you please, 'why you came down.'

The apostle forms an opposition between the first and the second Adam. "The first man is of the earth, "earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." By which it appears, that as the earth was the natural place of the first man, so heaven must be the natural place of the Second. And as these words, "The first "man *is of the earth*;" do not merely signify, that Adam was for a few moments in the earth, and was afterwards raised out of it; but that, before he was

enlivened by the breath of God, he was in the earth, as in his original, or natural place: so these words, "The "second man is the Lord *from heaven*," do not only signify that Christ came from heaven, after having been there a few days; but that, before he descended to earth, he had been always in heaven, as in his proper and natural place.—From all which it is evident, if Jesus be by nature a mere man, that various passages of Scripture are obscure and unintelligible. Nor will it be any difficult matter to prove, on the same hypothesis, that they are false, absurd, and impious. In order to which I would propose the following particulars to the reader's consideration.

The passages adduced shew, with others of a similar kind, that Christ existed in heaven, before his conception, as in his natural place. For what else can be the primary import of such expressions as these? "What "and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he "was before? He came from above—He came down "from heaven—The second man is the Lord from "heaven." But this idea is false, if Jesus be a mere man.—Again: Our Lord has heaven for his original, in a much higher sense than any other man. For the Scripture opposes him to all others, because they are *from below*, but he *from above:* they are of *the earth*, but he is *from heaven*. But this representation is not according to truth, if Jesus be by nature a mere man. For, as such, he cannot be from above, or from heaven, but either because he had God for his original; or because God sent him; or because he was replenished with Divine gifts; or because he was predestinated to the glory of heaven. But all these particulars agree to other men. For God is the immediate cause of their souls. He immediately produced both the body and soul of the first man. He sent the prophets and apostles, and endued them with extraordinary and miraculous gifts. He predestinated his people to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and fits them, by the sanctifying

influences of the Holy Ghoſt, for the fruition of glory in the heavenly world. Conſequently, as none of theſe characters are peculiar to Chriſt, but common to him with many other men; prophets, apoſtles, and thouſands more, may be ſaid to "come from above; "to come down from heaven; and to come from God," in the ſame ſenſe in which thoſe words are applied to Jeſus Chriſt.—So, on the other hand, if we believe our opponents, Chriſt is *from below*, and *of the earth*, in the ſame ſenſe that we are. We are ſaid to be *from below*, and to be *of the earth*, either becauſe we have a groſs, terreſtrial nature; or becauſe our bodies were firſt taken out of the earth. Jeſus has alſo a corporal nature, and his body was formed of matter which came originally from the earth, as well as ours. Nor would it avail to ſay, 'That it was refined and faſhioned by 'the Holy Spirit.' For the matter of which the body of Adam was made, received its human form from the immediate power of God.

In a word, Chriſt, on the Socinian principles, may be conſidered, either as a man, or as a meſſenger of God. Under the *latter* of theſe conſiderations, he came *from above;* he came down *from heaven;* becauſe his call was immediately from God. But then if this were the only ſenſe in which he came from God, he would have no pre-eminence above the ancient prophets. If we conſider him under the *former* view, he muſt have come from heaven, either in reſpect of his body, or in regard to his ſoul. If the *latter*, becauſe it was brought into exiſtence by the immediate power of God; he has no advantage above men in general. For it is written, "The ſpirit ſhall return to God who gave it." If the *former*, becauſe it was produced by Divine power; it is common to him with other men. If on account of its being produced in a *miraculous* manner; it is an honour in which Iſaac and John the Baptiſt ſhared. If becauſe it was produced *without the intervention* of man; it is common to him with the firſt Adam.

This leads me to obſerve, that thoſe paſſages of Scripture from which we argue, naturally ſuggeſt to our minds, not only that Jeſus came from above and came down from heaven, in a much nobler ſenſe than men in general, or than the firſt man in particular; but alſo, that it is in this very reſpect, that he is incomparably ſuperior to our common parent, the firſt Adam. According to that ſaying; "The firſt man is "of the earth, earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord "from heaven." But, if Jeſus be a mere man, this muſt be falſe. For, as ſuch, he comes of the earth, as our great pregenitor did; and the firſt Adam came from heaven in much the ſame ſenſe, as the Second.—Again: The Scriptures teach us to conſider Jeſus as humbling and abaſing himſelf, when he came into our world; becauſe they repreſent him as coming from heaven, a place of perfect holineſs and glory; to earth, which is the reſidence of impurity, diſorder, and trouble.—Thus it appears that the paſſages we have examined, are calculated, on the Socinian hypotheſis, to raiſe *falſe* ideas in our minds.

The above declarations of the Holy Ghoſt, if underſtood according to the ſentiments of our opponents, preſent us with a ſenſe which is *abſurd* and *ridiculous*. To prove this, we need only conſider them in connection with their comment. When explaining theſe words; "What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man "aſcend where he was before?" they pretend that this clauſe, "where he was before;" is to be underſtood *figuratively*. 'Jeſus means, ſay they, that the Son of 'man had been in heaven, before he aſcended thither 'after his reſurrection: not only becauſe he was, long 'before that, continually in heaven, by meditation; 'but alſo becauſe he had a knowledge of all celeſtial 'things, even the moſt Divine ſecrets; and all things 'which exiſt and are done in heaven, were ſo well 'known by him, that he ſaw them as clearly as if they 'had been before him. So that, though he was on

"earth, yet he was also in heaven.'—But how absurd, how ridiculous, does this text appear, under the disguise of such a comment! What, are *to be* in heaven, and *to think* on heaven, synonymous phrases! Who ever used them as such? Why does Christ make use of a verb which signifies the time *past*, when he ought to express the time *present*? If, when he uttered these words, he intended to signify, that he was in heaven, in regard to his thoughts and meditations; why did he not say, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he *now is*? What can be the meaning of these words, "Where he was before?" Or what idea are we to affix to the term *before*? By what means are we to learn, that the Wisdom of God, who speaks literally, as all agree, when he says, "If ye see him ascend;" concludes the literal sense in the middle of the sentence, and that the rest must be understood figuratively? even though these two phrases, *to ascend—where he was*—are so closely connected, that all mankind, one would have thought, must have taken them, either both in a literal, or both in a figurative sense. How can they avoid seeing an opposition between the place where Jesus was, before his incarnation; and the place where he was, when he uttered these words? If he was then upon earth, in a proper sense; he must, according to these words, have been also in heaven, in a proper sense. What honest and sensible man ever expressed himself after this manner; 'I am going to Japan, where 'I *was before*;' when he only meant, 'I am going to 'Japan, where I was in my *thoughts* and *desires*?'—Believers are exhorted to heavenly-mindedness; to set their affections on things above; but they are never said to ascend "where they were before." For though we may say, 'Our hearts are in heaven, if our treasure 'be there;' the metaphor plainly appearing; yet we cannot, without impertinence and nonsense say, 'What 'and if ye shall see us ascend where we were before?' because there is nothing, in these expressions, but

what leads us to consider them in a literal sense; and, therefore, the mind is shocked at the thought of a metaphor.

These words, "I came down from heaven," as interpreted by them, are thus to be understood. 'My 'flesh was formed by the wonderful counsel and power 'of God, and so it came from God himself. When, 'therefore, it is said, that Jesus Christ "came down 'from heaven;" no more is intended, than that he 'came from God.'—But if so, what is the meaning of that saying; "The first man is of the earth, earthy; "the second man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN?" Adam's body, as before observed, was formed by the immediate power of God. He, therefore, came from God, in that sense: he, consequently, according to this interpretation, came down from heaven, as well as Jesus Christ.—Besides, who, that is not blinded by prejudice, and whose judgment is not perverted by a sanguine attachment to an unscriptural tenet;—who, I say, can forbear to see a very different meaning in these words, "I came down from heaven, not to do my "own will, but the will of him that sent me;" from what is contained in these, 'My flesh was formed by 'the wonderful power of God?' For, in the *former*, there is a sending, antecedent to a coming down; and a coming down, consequent to a sending; but in the *latter*, not a tittle of all this. The interpretation, therefore, which our opponents put on these passages of sacred writ, renders them absurd and ridiculous.

Once more: The language of Scripture, in the texts before us, according to the Socinian creed, is not agreeable to common modesty, nor to that respect we owe to the Deity; and, consequently, it must be *impious*. For if Jesus be a mere man, he is *of the earth*, as well as the first man. He cannot, therefore, so often speak of "coming from above;" and of "coming "down from heaven," in contradistinction to the original of other men, without being chargeable with

immodeſty; without being guilty of arrogance.—Much leſs can it be ſaid of him, as a mere man, "He is THE "LORD from heaven." We do not uſe to ſpeak thus of one who naturally belongs to the earth, and obtains the inheritance of heaven and the title of LORD, only by grace. On the contrary, truth and modeſty require that we ſhould ſay; Jeſus Chriſt being of the earth, is, by nature, earthly; but, by the favour of God, he is the Lord from heaven. Now, as one cannot be void of modeſty, in this reſpect, without falling into impiety; becauſe a perſon cannot aſſume ſuch honours to himſelf, without infringing on the glory of God; ſo it is evident, that the language of Scripture is not only obſcure and falſe, not only abſurd and ridiculous, but alſo *impious*; if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man.—The Arian hypotheſis ſhall be conſidered, in a following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Evidences of the ſame truth, ariſing from thoſe paſſages of Scripture, which expreſs the Pre-exiſtence of JESUS CHRIST.

THE Scriptures inform us, that Chriſt exiſted before he was conceived in the womb of Mary; that he was before John the Baptiſt; that the prophets were inſpired by him; that he was before Abraham; that he was in the beginning of all things; and that he was before all ages. The Divine records aſſert, that he "was in the form of God;" and, afterwards, "made "himſelf of no reputation, by taking upon him the form "of a ſervant." He, therefore, muſt have exiſted before his humiliation; and, conſequently, before his conception in the virgin's womb.—The ſame infallible

rule of our faith declares, that he "was made of the "seed of David, according to the flesh." Certainly, then, in his wonderful Person there must be a nature distinct from the human; a nature, in respect of which, he was *not* made of the seed of David.—An unerring writer calls him, "GOD manifest in the flesh." Which must imply, that he who was thus manifested, existed prior to his appearance in a corporal nature.—An evangelist informs us, that THE WORD, who was in the beginning, and was God, "was made flesh:" which necessarily supposes that He existed before that flesh to which he was united.

Again: Jesus himself affirms, with a solemn asseveration, a kind of oath; "Verily, I say unto you, before "Abraham was, I am." Either, then, he existed before that renowned patriarch was born, or his words convey a false idea; that being the natural signification of the terms, and the first impression they make on our minds.—Peter, speaking of the ancient prophets, represents them, as "searching diligently what, or what "manner of time the SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was "in them did signify, when it testified before-hand "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should "follow." But if Jesus did not exist in the times of the prophets, they could not speak, they could not write, by his Spirit, or by his inspiration. Hence we learn, that the Spirit of Christ was no less really granted to them, under the Mosaic œconomy, than he was afterwards to the apostles. He existed, therefore, in the times of the former, as well as in those of the latter. For there is no reason to suppose, that the Spirit, by whose direction the Hebrew seers predicted the sufferings and glory of God's Messiah, is called the "Spirit of "Christ," merely because they prophesied concerning him. The prophets foretold the coming and ministry of the apostles; but is that a sufficient reason to say, that the Spirit of the apostles was in them?—The evangelist John asserts, that Christ "was in the begin-

"ning; that he was with God;" and that "by him "all things were made." Conſequently, he exiſted before time commenced, and before the world was formed.—But, not to multiply quotations, I ſhall only once more obſerve, that Chriſt, when addreſſing his divine Father, ſays; "And now, O Father, glorify "thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I "had with thee before the world was." And, in another place, with great ſolemnity and with an air of Divine authority, he calls himſelf, "The Alpha and "Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Firſt and "the Laſt." Now, if we admit the venerable and auguſt Speaker to talk ſenſibly and to mean as he ſpeaks, we muſt conclude, that he exiſted before the creation, and poſſeſſed a Divine glory prior to the birth of time.

To judge of the plain and natural import of theſe paſſages, we need only to conſider the impreſſion they have made on the minds of men, for ſo many ages, ſince the Scripture was penned. The Socinians may chooſe what arbitrators they pleaſe, to determine the direct and natural ſignification of the expreſſions. If they ſuſpect, either the judgment or the impartiality, of the orthodox, will they truſt the *Arians;* who are not prepoſſeſſed in favour of the proper Deity of Jeſus Chriſt, any more than themſelves? But if they ſhould conſider the diſciples of Arius as incompetent judges, will they truſt the *Mahometans;* who agree with Socinus in rejecting, not only the eternal Divinity, but alſo the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt? Yet the muſſulmen will tell them, that they ſee the ſame, in the paſſages adduced, that we do; which obliges them to reject the New Teſtament, as being, either entirely ſuppoſititious, or eſſentially corrupted. And, indeed, it may admit of a query, whether we have not reaſon to ſuſpect that this is the ſecret perſuaſion of our adverſaries; ſeeing their interpretations of theſe paſſages are ſo various, and ſome of them, ſo contradictory.—Is it propable, for inſtance, that the natural impreſſion of theſe words,

"Before Abraham was, I am;" ſuggeſted to Socinus that interpretation of them, which he ſays coſt him ſo much labour, and which God did not diſcover to him till after he had ſpent ſeveral days in prayer? And yet, it is very obſervable, that his pretended divinely revealed ſenſe of the text, was never adopted by the teachers of his perſuaſion. Nor is it any wonder that they ſhould unanimouſly reject it. For if, when our Lord ſaid, "Before Abraham was, I am;" he only meant, 'I 'am, before Abraham was, what the name *Abraham* 'ſignifies;' that is, *The father of many nations;*—in other words, That Chriſt exiſted before the Gentiles became the children of Abraham; if, I ſay, this be the meaning of Jeſus, never any expreſſions were of a more obſcure, fallacious, and enſnaring kind.—But this novel and far fetched interpretation is abſolutely void of truth. For theſe words, "before Abraham was," do not ſignify, 'before that eminent patriarch was *Abraham*;' but before he who was honoured with that expreſſive name had *a being;* before he was in the world. Even as theſe words, 'Before Pompey the Great was;' do not ſignify, 'before Pompey was ſurnamed, or was 'really *the Great*;' but before he *exiſted*.—Beſides, the gloſs of Socinus renders the aſſertion of Jeſus abſurd. For what mighty wonder was it, that He ſhould exiſt before the Gentiles became the children of Abraham? The very meaneſt perſon, who lived at that time, might have ſaid the ſame of himſelf.

But another Socinian writer gives a more plauſible interpretation of the text. He ſuppoſes, 'that Jeſus 'was before Abraham, in the ſame ſenſe in which he 'is called, the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the 'world.' In anſwer to which I obſerve, That the two paſſages are far from being parallel. The *latter* is evidently figurative; as appears by the term *ſlain*, or *ſacrificed*, and by other circumſtances of the text. But in the *former*, every thing leads to the literal ſenſe. It is an objection purely literal which the Jews make,

when they ſay; "Thou art not yet fifty years old." Nor does the text before us, which ſo ſtrongly denotes the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, expreſs any thing, when ſo underſtood, but what is contained in great numbers of others. Beſides, to render theſe two paſſages perfectly ſimilar, we muſt ſuppoſe it recorded in Scripture; 'That 'Jeſus, being in the form of a ſacrifice, was afterwards 'pleaſed to take upon him the form of a man—That 'he came from ſuffering when he appeared in the world —That he died before Abraham was—That his crucifixion and death were from ancient times—That he 'ſuffered from the beginning, or ever the earth was— 'And that, juſt before he made his exit on Calvary, he 'thus addreſſed his Father; Behold me, ready to 'endure the ſame ſufferings which I underwent with 'thee before the world was.' But would not ſuch language be conſidered as falſe, abſurd, and ridiculous? Would not ſuch a way of ſpeaking, concerning Jeſus Chriſt, be deteſted; even though it muſt be allowed, that the Holy Spirit does call him, "The Lamb ſlain "from the foundation of the world?"

Further: In the paſſage quoted from the Revelation, there ſeems to be one of thoſe tranſpoſitions which are common in the Scriptures, and in all ſorts of authors; and if ſo, it may be thus rendered: "And all that are "upon the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names are not "written, from the foundation of the world, in the book "of life of the Lamb ſlain *." Theſe words, "from the "foundation of the world;" being connected with, "written in the book of life." For eternal predeſtination to grace and holineſs, to happineſs and glory, is the thing intended by thoſe expreſſions; and that divine purpoſe, reſpecting the choſen of God, is repreſented as the reaſon why they ſhall not worſhip the beaſt, and periſh in their iniquity. Such being the general ſenſe of the text, it does not ſeem at all neceſſary to ſuppoſe,

* Compare Rev. xvii. 8.

that the eternal efficacy of our Lord's atonement made on the croſs, is intended by theſe words; "Slain from "the foundation of the world;" though we readily allow, that all the people of God, from the beginning, were pardoned and ſaved in virtue of it.—And though, according to this tranſlation, the term *ſlain* is tranſpoſed; yet, when it is conſidered that Jeſus is repreſented, in the Revelation of John, not only as a *lamb*, but alſo as a lamb *ſlain* and *ſacrificed*; we have no reaſon to wonder that the names of the elect are ſaid to be written, not only "in the book of *the Lamb*," but in that of the Lamb *ſlain*.

In reference, therefore, to theſe words, "Before "Abraham was, I am;" our adverſaries muſt either ſay, that Chriſt was before Abraham in the purpoſe of God; or, that he was before that illuſtrious patriarch became the father of many nations. But theſe interpretations are contemptibly weak, and render the expreſſions abſolutely unworthy of the Divine Speaker. Is it not very ſurpriſing, think you, that Chriſt ſhould have exiſted in the decree of God, before Abraham was born? There is nothing in this which may not be ſaid of all men, univerſally, who have lived ſince that patriarch's time. Is it not alſo aſtoniſhing, that the Meſſiah ſhould exiſt, before the Gentiles were become the children of Abraham? This was true of all the apoſtles, even of Judas the traitor. And was it to confirm ſuch childiſh fancies as theſe, that the Wonderful Counſellor and the Wiſdom of God, made uſe of that ſolemn aſſeveration, *verily*? "VERILY, VERILY, I ſay unto you, before "Abraham was, I am."

But admitting there was a difficulty in this paſſage, which, to us, appears ſo clear, ſo expreſs and peremptory; yet it would be but reaſonable to explain it by many other parallel places, which evidently aſſert the pre-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt. It is an eaſy matter for a man of learning, of genius, and of a fruitful invention, to find out a number of ſubtile diſtinctions; but it is not

so easy for him to rest satisfied in them, when they are invented. When they tell me, for instance, 'That 'Christ was before the prophets, and before Abraham, 'in excellence and dignity; and that we understand of 'a priority in *existence*, what the Scripture speaks of a 'pre-eminence in *dignity*;' my judgment cannot acquiesce in it. For the word of inspiration assures me repeatedly, that the Lord Redeemer "is the First and "the Last." Here the distinction is of no avail, but rather tends to embarrass them. For he is the first, in that respect in which he ought to be the *last*: for they will not say that he is the last in dignity. It cannot, therefore, be a priority of excellence that is here meant.—And how comes He to be represented to us, as "without *beginning* of days?" We cannot examine all those passages which speak of the pre-existence and eternal Divinity of our adored Redeemer, but we shall consider a few more of them with particular care.

CHAPTER VII.

The same Truth evinced, from Phil. ii. 5—8.

PAUL, in his epistle to the church of Christ at Philippi, says; "Let this mind be in you, which "was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form "of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: "but made himself of no reputation, and took upon "him the form of a servant, and was made in the "likeness of men. And, being found in fashion as a "man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto "death, even the death of the cross."—This emphatical and admirable passage is thus paraphrased by the Socinians. 'Who being in the form of God;

'commanding the creatures and controlling the elements 'when he was upon earth, as if he had been God; 'did not detain and obſtinately inſiſt on an equality 'with God, as one that is guilty of robbery. But 'he renounced this equality, to make himſelf of no 'reputation; taking the form of a ſervant, in obeying, 'though he commanded before, being treated as a ſlave, 'and becoming like ordinary men: and this though he 'was before in the form of God, by the power with 'which he was inveſted; and, ſhewing himſelf obedient, 'he ſubmitted to the death of the croſs.'—Such is the interpretation of our adverſaries. But, it may be obſerved, that theſe expreſſions, "In the form of God "—thought it not robbery—made himſelf of no reputa- "tion—took the form of a ſervant"—ſuffer manifeſt violence by this explanation. The following conſidera- tions may ſerve to ſhew the inconſiſtency there is, between the text and the comment.

When we meet with a ſingular expreſſion in Scripture, it is natural to explain it by ſuch as are parallel, or, at leaſt, have ſome likeneſs to it. Our opponents, there- fore, if they conſider this phraſe, "being in the form "of God," as extraordinary, ſhould compare it with thoſe paſſages which, in their natural import, ſignify nearly the ſame thing. Such, for inſtance, as the following: "In the beginning was the Word—The "Word was God. All things were made by him, and "without him was not any thing made that was made. "The true God—God bleſſed for ever."—Does Paul inform us, that our Lord was "in the form of God," before he made himſelf of no reputation and took upon him the form of a ſervant? Conformably to this John declares, that "the Word was in the beginning, and "that the Word was God." As, according to the one, the Word was God, before he was made fleſh; ſo, according to the other, Chriſt was in the form of God, prior to his taking the form of a ſervant, or his

appearance in human nature. Thus both express the same thing, and support the same truth.

Whence had our opposers their signification of the phrase, "being in the form of God?" In what language, human or Divine, do they find it signify, *to work miracles?* If the performance of a multitude of miracles were a sufficient ground of saying, that he who wrought them was in the form of God, Moses had a claim to the honour; for he performed astonishing works in the air, the earth, and the waters. Nay, the apostles were in the form of God; for they wrought very wonderful miracles, even greater, in some respects, than those of Christ himself, in pursuance of his own promise.—'Jesus, it may, perhaps, be said, wrought miracles in 'his own name and by his own power; but the apostles 'performed theirs in the name and by the power 'of their Lord.' But if Jesus wrought miracles in his own name and by his own power, our opposers must either give up one of their strongest objections against our sentiments, or contradict themselves in the most palpable manner. For some of the most learned and ingenious among them suppose, that they embarrass our cause exceedingly when they remind us; "That Christ "came not to do his own will, but the will of him that "sent him—That the doctrine he taught was not his "own, but the Father's—And that he who believes, "does not believe on Jesus, but on Him that sent him." They insist upon it, that 'the Father was the chief 'author of those wonderful works which Jesus did: that 'the Father was the real author of his resurrection: 'that the Father does all things by the Son, and that 'the Son can do nothing of himself.' If, then, Jesus performed miracles, not in his own name and by his own power, but in the name and by the power of the Father; he was no more independent on God, when he wrought them, than the apostles were when they astonished the world by numbers of miraculous facts. Consequently, if they cannot be said to have been "in

"the form of God," becauſe they did nothing but in the name and by the power of their Maſter; neither can Jeſus be ſo conſidered, becauſe he did nothing but in the name and by the power of his Father.

Nor are the Socinians able to fix upon the *time*, when Chriſt was "in the form of God," without contradicting themſelves, or confronting the Scripture. For, either it was during the thirty years which he lived as a private perſon; or after he appeared in a public character, between the time of his baptiſm and that of his death. Not the *former;* becauſe in all that ſpace of time we do not find that he wrought any miracles. Nor can it be the *latter;* for if it were, he muſt have aſſumed the form of God at that very time when he began moſt evidently to *humble* himſelf; even when he was tempted of the devil, and began to ſuffer all the inconveniences of life, and all the outrage of perſecution. But is it poſſible, without the moſt glaring impropriety and the greateſt abſurdity, to call a ſtate of extreme poverty, and ſhame, and affliction, a "being "in the form of God?"—The miracles which Jeſus wrought, were after he humbled himſelf; after he was laid in a manger—after he eſcaped the fury of a tyrant, thirſting for his blood—and after he returned from his exile in Egypt. So that if he was "in the form of "God," becauſe he controlled the courſe of nature and exerciſed dominion over the creatures, in the wonderful miracles which he performed; it muſt neceſſarily follow, that he was not in that Divine form till after he began to humble himſelf and to make himſelf of no reputation; which is a direct contradiction of the ſacred text.

Again: To underſtand theſe words, "Being in the "form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal "with God," in the ſenſe of our adverſaries, is inconſiſtent with the occaſion of them and the ſcope of the place. Paul, it is manifeſt, mentions the conduct of Jeſus Chriſt, as a wonderful, aſtoniſhing, unparalleled inſtance of condeſcenſion, with a view to enforce his

exhortations to humility. But, if Jesus be a mere man, or only an exalted creature, it is no wonder that he 'did not obstinately insist,' that he did not so much as *think*, 'on an equality with God:' for, in so doing, he would have been guilty of Luciferian pride, and of the most impious robbery.

By considering these two clauses, in their proper connection, "being in the form of God—he thought it "not robbery to be equal with God;" we have a further proof of the truth for which we contend. For it is evident, that our Lord's claim of "*equality* with God," is here founded, by the apostle, on his "existing in *the* "*form* of God;" and not on his performing of any works whatever.—Nor ought the two terms ὑπάρχων and λαβὼν, which stand opposed in the passage, to be overlooked. It is very observable, that the apostle uses the *former*, when he speaks of the "form of God;" asserting, that Jesus *existed* in that Divine form: plainly signifying, that it was not an accidental and transient thing, but a property belonging to his glorious Person, and therefore permanent. But when he speaks of the opposite form, he employs the *latter* of those expressions, and says, he *received* it; evidently denoting, that it was not essential, but foreign and accidental to him. For he who *receives* a form, is not supposed to have had it always; nor is it considered as essential to him.—Besides, if Jesus be a mere creature, he never was, nor ever can be, strictly speaking, in any form but that of *a servant*, in respect of the eternal Sovereign.

But as the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scripture, is his own best interpreter, it is proper to compare this passage with others, in order to see its genuine meaning. When the apostle speaks of Jesus Christ, as "being in "the form of God," as being "equal with God;" and yet informs us, that he "took upon him the form of a "servant, and made himself of no reputation;" we cannot but consider the Lord Redeemer, as existing in

two very different *ſtates:* a ſtate of the ſublimeſt glory preceding, and a ſtate of the deepeſt humiliation following. So, when we advert to that ſaying, "He was "made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh;" we have the idea of *two natures* in our Divine Saviour. One, in reſpect of which, he is David's offspring; the other, ſuch as conſtitutes him David's Lord. One, the exiſtence of which commenced at his conception; the other, without beginning and unchangeable.—Theſe two paſſages, it is evident, are perfectly correſpondent. For if Jeſus exiſted before he was made of the ſeed of David, according to the fleſh; it muſt have been either in the form of man, or in the form of God. Not the *former*, for then he muſt have exiſted in fleſh, prior to his being made of the ſeed of David, according to the fleſh; which is abſurd and contrary to the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt. It muſt, conſequently, be the *latter;* that is, before his incarnation he exiſted in the form of God, and in that only.

This will appear in a ſtronger light, if we conſider the following paſſage; "God was manifeſt in the fleſh." Chriſt exiſted before he was in the fleſh. For though he was made of the ſeed of David, yet not abſolutely, but "according to the fleſh." Chriſt was GOD; for GOD was manifeſt in that fleſh which was made of the ſeed of David.—By comparing this and the two preceding paſſages together, it appears, That Jeſus Chriſt exiſted in the form of God, that he was God; and might, conſequently, be conſidered as equal with the Father before that fleſh which was made of the ſeed of David, and in which God was manifeſted, had a being.

Once more: He who is the true and faithful Witneſs aſſerts, concerning himſelf; "I came forth from the "Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave "the world and go to the Father." Before our Lord came into the world, he was not made of the ſeed of David; was not fleſh, nor manifeſted in the fleſh; nor was he in the form of a ſervant. No; conſidered in his

firſt ſtate, he was the Son, the only Son of the Father; that Divine Perſon who, exiſting in the form of God, and being God, was to be manifeſted in the fleſh; was to be the wonderful IMMANUEL.

CHAPTER VIII.

The ſame truth confirmed and illuſtrated, from John i. 1—14. The Socinian interpretation of this paſſage conſidered and expoſed.

THE beginning of the Goſpel according to the evangeliſt John, would be quite unintelligible, were we to deny the pre-exiſtence and eternal Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt. The following expreſſions, for inſtance; "In the beginning was the Word—The Word was "with God—The Word was God—All things were "made by him—The Word was made fleſh—The "world was made by him"—Theſe expreſſions, I ſay, taken in any other view, are no better, are no other, than incomprehenſible nonſenſe: and men, who are not obliged to underſtand that which is in itſelf unintelligible, cannot be culpable for not diſcovering a ſenſe in them, which is contrary to the natural ſignification of the terms.

"In the beginning was the Word." Our expoſition has nothing obſcure, nothing perplexed in it; but that of our opponents is far-fetched and jejune, is forced and unnatural. They inſiſt upon it, that by "the beginning," the *commencement* of the goſpel-diſpenſation is intended. But ſo to interpret the phraſe, is to reſtrain a general expreſſion to a particular and uncommon ſenſe, without the leaſt warrant from the circumſtances and ſcope of the place, and is nothing ſhort of offering violence to the text. It cannot be ſuppoſed, with the leaſt ſhadow

of reason, that a *particular* beginning is meant, because nothing precedes it, nothing follows it, so to determine the sense; or which gives the least intimation that the expression ought to be understood in a signification different from that which it usually has. For these words begin the gospel, and are repeated by the evangelist afterwards, without giving any notice of their being used in a particular sense. To imagine that a mental reservation may determine general expressions to a particular meaning, is a great mistake. Any one, writing the history of Augustus, would be very impertinent if he should say; 'In the beginning was Augustus;' meaning, that he lived from the time of Julius Cesar. Or, if a man were to write the history of Moses, and the surprising things which the God of Israel wrought by his ministry, and should introduce the wonderful narrative thus; 'In the 'beginning was Moses;' meaning, he was from the time that God began to deliver the seed of Jacob from Egyptian bondage. For these mental explanations would not prevent the language from being contrary to good sense, because it would be unintelligible.

If the evangelist's meaning had been what they suppose, he might have explained himself by saying, 'Jesus Christ 'lived from the beginning of the gospel.' Yet even then his expressions would not have been free from obscurity: because we should have been at a loss to know, from what period, or from what event, this *beginning* of the gospel was to be dated. For if you understand the first glad tidings of the great salvation, which was to be accomplished by Jesus Christ, it is evident, on the principles of our opponents, that He did not then exist; the prophets having published the salvation of God long before the Messiah's conception. If, by this beginning, you understand the time when the prophetic oracles began to be fulfilled; then, I demand, why it is not dated from the time of Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias, or to Mary? Or from the time that the father of John the Baptist, being filled with the Holy Spirit, described

the honourable and important work of his new-born son, and foretold the immediate appearance of Christ? Or from the day that Simeon uttered his comprehensive prophecy, with the infant Saviour in his arms?

To that remarkable character, THE WORLD, our adversaries give several significations; which appear to be invented only out of necessity to defend their cause. 'It includes, say they, a metaphor, or a metonymy.'—But if they dealt ingenuously, they would fix either upon the one, or the other; for one figure would be sufficient to answer the purpose. But what would suffice, in itself, does not satisfy our opponents; and the mistrust they have of the one, makes them have recourse to the other. For, we may venture to say, it is not the sense of Scripture they give us, but their own mistakes, which they seem determined to defend.

This appears from their comment on the following clause: "The Word was with God." For if it were lawful to take these expressions in a signification which is not natural to them, several senses might be found equally proper with that which they have palmed upon them. Would these terms, "The Word was with "God," bear to be interpreted thus, 'The Word 'was known of God only;' why might we not insist upon it, that their more natural signification is, 'The 'Word was hid in heaven;' or, 'The Word was 'beloved of God;' or, 'The Word only knew the 'counsel of God?' These are more probable significations of the text, and yet they fix upon this, 'The 'Word was known of God only;' or, according to others, 'He was appointed of God to his office.'

In much the same awkward and unwarrantable manner they interpret the following remarkable and emphatical assertion; "The Word was GOD." That is, according to them, 'Every thing in Jesus was Divine; so that 'the ministry of the prophets, compared with his, was 'human.'—Had they been satisfied with this interpretation; had they not been conscious of its futility, they

would not have added; 'Jesus is called GOD, because 'he sustained, or was to sustain, the person of God.' Nor can they entirely acquiesce in this; they, therefore, proceed and assert, 'That Christ was appointed to a 'supreme glory and power; and because he could not 'fail of enjoying this power and glory, he is called 'GOD.'—But what ambiguity is this, to give such different explanations of the same expressions! Or, how great is that obscurity, which, in a single word, conceals so many things, and renders them so very difficult to be unfolded!

"All things were made by Him—The world was "made by Him." These two clauses are parallel; yet they find out a way to render them very different. *All things*, is expressed by *the world—were made*, by *the world was made*. They, however, have found out the secret to set these expressions at a prodigious distance one from another: understanding by *all things*, all that pertain to the gospel; and by *the world*, the world to come, heaven, or the society of men: by, *all things were made*, all things were formed, or produced; and by *the world was made*, the world was renewed. It is plain, from this different way of explaining synonymous passages, that their main design is to support their own sentiments; how perplexed soever they may render the sacred text.

Of this we have a further proof by their asserting, that the term *world* is used in three different and remote senses, in the same verse: that is, for the society of men; for heaven; and for carnal or profane men. But if we must take one term in three different senses, in the same place; who, without a spirit of divination, can be certain that he understands any part of the sacred Records; or that, in any instance, he has discovered the meaning of the Holy Ghost? So to treat the inspired writings is, not to interpret, but to accomodate them to our own erroneous opinions.

But besides that variety of interpretations, which they give to the same expressions, they attribute to the

evangeliſt different *ends;* ſo very different as to be ſometimes directly oppoſite one to another. Nor can this proceed from a want of diſcernment; for we readily acknowledge, that we have to do with writers of great ingenuity; but from that embarraſſment in which the neceſſity of defending their cauſe involves them, there being ſo many expreſs paſſages of Scripture directly contrary to their avowed ſentiments.

If we believe them, 'the deſign of the Holy Spirit, 'in the beginning of the goſpel according to John, is 'to obviate an objection which might be made to the 'dignity of Jeſus Chriſt, from the precedence which 'John the Baptiſt had, in reſpect of time.' But when they are urged to ſhew, why Chriſt is here called GOD, there being no neceſſity that he ſhould bear that ſublime name to diſtinguiſh him from the ſon of Zacharias; for every perplexity they have a new evaſion. They pretend, 'that the evangeliſt, thinking no more of John the 'Baptiſt, intends to diſtinguiſh Jeſus by the name, GOD, 'from all the ancient prophets; becauſe their miniſtry, 'compared with his, was human.' Here are ſeveral deſigns aſcribed to the inſpired writer, let us now examine them.

The evangeliſt is afraid we ſhould, 'prefer John the 'ſervant, to Chriſt the maſter, becauſe the Baptiſt 'came before him.' For the ſame reaſon he might have been apprehenſive, that we ſhould prefer Moſes and the prophets to Him of whom they ſpake, becauſe they lived before him. But, admitting there was any danger of looking upon the Baptiſt as the Meſſiah, when he began to preach the goſpel; yet the danger was entirely over, ſo ſoon as John was beheaded and Jeſus was riſen from the dead.—Suppoſing, however, the evangeliſt did apprehend that ſome would be ſo ſimple as to prefer John to Chriſt, on account of his coming before him, how does he obviate this miſtake? He is entirely ſilent when he ſhould ſpeak, and he ſpeaks when he ſhould hold his tongue. The *former:* For he does not ſay,

The ſervants go before their Maſter: The prophets were before the coming of the Meſſiah, though they were leſs than He; and, therefore, we muſt not wonder that the venerable Baptiſt appeared before Jeſus Chriſt, being commiſſioned to prepare his way and to make his paths ſtraight. The *latter:* For he ſays, Jeſus was from the beginning of John's miniſtry; which does not remove the objection at all. For though He was from that time, as well as John; yet the Baptiſt exerciſed the functions of his miniſtry, while Jeſus did nothing; which is the very difficulty the evangeliſt ſhould have prevented.

But though we cannot find, in the interpretation of our opponents, ſuch deſigns as are worthy of the Holy Spirit; yet we meet with ſuch diſorder and confuſion in it, as can only agree to a ſpirit who intended, either to lead us into error, or to ſpeak ſo as not to be underſtood. For, by theſe words, "In the beginning," they maintain that the commencement of the Baptiſt's miniſtry is intended: even though it is manifeſt, that the evangeliſt has not only not yet *mentioned* John, but does not ſpeak of him till he has concluded his ſublime encomium on the DIVINE WORD; and then does it in ſuch a manner as plainly to ſhew, that he means to ſpeak of him for the *firſt* time, ſaying, "There was a "man ſent from God, whoſe name was JOHN."—Further: In that beginning which is here intended, "the Word was—was with God—and was God." But not a tittle of this agrees to Jeſus Chriſt, according to their hypotheſis, and their interpretation of the text. He was not then *the Word;* for he had not, at that time, publiſhed the counſel of God. He was not *with God;* at leaſt, not in a proper ſenſe; for, according to them, he was not tranſlated into heaven till after his baptiſm. Nor was he *God;* for he was not then inveſted with his offices, in the execution of which he repreſents God, and bears his name.

It would be but a small matter for the words of the evangelist to want *order*, if they were not destitute of *truth*; but, admitting the interpretation of our adversaries, we can hardly doubt of their falsehood. Certain it is, however, that we may substitute contradictory propositions in the place of those which the sacred writer has used, which will appear much more intelligible, and much more agreeable, in their proper signification, to truth and fact.—For instance: Jesus Christ was *not* in the beginning of the gospel. He was *not* the Word from the beginning. He was *not* then with God. He was *not* God. All things, even all that respect the œconomy of the gospel, were *not* made by him; for several of them were made without him, before him, and after him. The world was *not* made by him. The Word was *not* made flesh; but flesh was made the Word. He is the light, but *not* that light which illuminates every man that cometh into the world.

'Jesus Christ was not in *the beginning* of the gospel.' This proposition, on their hypothesis, is undoubtedly true: the embassy of the angel to Zacharias, giving the true beginning to this gospel; which was afterwards continued by sending another celestial envoy to the shepherds of Bethlehem, by the preaching of John the Baptist, and by that of Jesus and his apostles.—'Jesus 'was *not*, in this beginning, *the Word*,' neither by a metaphor, nor by a metonymy. Not by *a metaphor*: For it could not then be said, 'As a man's word 'discovers his thoughts, so Jesus manifests the thoughts 'and counsel of God.' Not by *a metonymy*: For he could not borrow that name from words which he had not then spoken, nor caused to be published.—'He was 'not God,' in whatever sense that august name be understood. He could be so called 'because his ministry was 'Divine,' as opposed to that of the prophets; for he did not then exercise his ministry. Nor 'because he 'sustained the person of God;' for he did not then represent God in any wise. Nor 'because he was

'appointed to the enjoyment of divine power and glory.' For the ordinary ſtyle of Scripture will not admit of it. It is no where ſaid, for inſtance, That Saul was an apoſtle, a light of the church, or a teacher of the Gentiles, in the beginning of the goſpel, when he was full of perſecuting rage againſt the diſciples of Chriſt, becauſe he was then appointed to the apoſtleſhip. Nor, that Moſes was a mediator between God and the Iſraelites, in the beginning; that is, from the time that he fed the cattle of Jethro. Nor, that the ſons of Zebedee were the ſons of thunder, from the time they did not nothing but fiſh with their father.

Yet, if the interpretation of our opponents were juſt, the high encomium here given of Jeſus Chriſt would be in various particulars, applicable to Moſes. As for example: "In the beginning was the Word." Moſes was from the beginning that God manifeſted his deſign of bringing the poſterity of Abraham out of the land of Egypt. And he may be called "the Word," both by a metaphor, and by a metonymy. By a *metaphor*; becauſe as a word ſerves to expreſs the thoughts of a man, ſo he was the choſen inſtrument of making known the counſel of God. By a *metonymy*; becauſe he was the miniſter of the word; he brought it from the mount, committed it to writing, and made it known to the Levites, who were appointed to inſtruct the people; and becauſe he may bear the name of that word, of which he was the chief publiſher.—Moſes was "with "God," from the beginning. For, though he was unknown to men and deſpiſed by them, he was known of God, and honoured with a Divine revelation.—He "was God;" for he was appointed to repreſent God, according to thoſe words, which are ſo often quoted by our adverſaries: "Thou ſhalt be to him inſtead of "God." Yes, he was God in all thoſe three ſenſes, which are mentioned by our oppoſers. His miniſtry was *heavenly* and *divine*, in compariſon of theirs who went before him. For there was no prophet raiſed up

in Iſrael equal to him, who beheld God face to face, and talked with him as a man talketh to his friend. He may alſo be ſo called, becauſe, as juſt obſerved, he *repreſented* God, was inveſted with his power, was his ambaſſador, and ſpake to Pharaoh on his behalf. Again: He was God, becauſe he was *appointed to a glory* and to the *exerciſe of a power* truly divine: for he was to perform moſt aſtoniſhing miracles in all the parts of nature.—"All things were made by him;" that is, all things relating to the deliverance of the Iſraelites, and the eſtabliſhment of the law.

This conformity will appear the greater, if it be conſidered, that as Jeſus Chriſt, on the principles of our opponents, acted only by the power of his Father, in working miracles; ſo Moſes, in the performance of his wonderful works, acted only by the power of God. And as all the miracles, which ſignalized the goſpel, were not wrought by the miniſtry of Chriſt; for he neither ſent the angels with the tidings of his birth, nor kindled the ſtar which appeared to the wiſe men: ſo all the aſtoniſhing works, attending the deliverance of the choſen tribes, were not performed by the miniſtry of Moſes, but the far greater number of them certainly were. Now, ſo many, ſo great, and amazingly diverſified miracles being performed by his miniſtry, may it not be ſaid; "Without him was not any thing made that was "made?"—Once more: This Old Teſtament Word "was made fleſh;" that is, he was fleſh. For Moſes was a man, though he acted as God. There can be little doubt, therefore, but this expreſſion belongs to him, as well as the reſt.

Here our adverſaries are greatly embarraſſed. For if they allow, that ſuch language might be uſed concerning Moſes, they muſt confeſs, that he was qualified to fill the higheſt encomium that is given by the Holy Spirit to Jeſus Chriſt; it being certain, that the Scripture never ſpeaks more honourably of him, than in the beginning of the goſpel according to John. But if they

deny that such language is applicable to Moses, they must necessarily own, that the words of the evangelist contain a much higher and nobler sense, than that which they affix to them.

CHAPTER IX.

The same Argument continued.

STILL further to evince the truth for which we plead, from this important paragraph, I shall now proceed to shew, That there is not one of those remarkable expressions, which we have under consideration, that will admit the sense affixed to it by our opponents.

The phrase, "the beginning," or, "in the beginning," when used so generally, always signifies the beginning of the world. For instance; "In the beginning God "created the heaven and the earth—The Lord possessed "me in the beginning of his way, before his works of "old—Thou Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the "foundation of the earth—He which made man at the "beginning—From the beginning it was not so—Ye "know Him that is from the beginning—The devil "sinneth from the beginning"—These, I say, and similar expressions, must be understood, either absolutely of the beginning of all things; or, at least, with a particular reference to that beginning. Had they a different meaning, they would be unintelligible; this being the obvious and natural signification of the terms.

"THE WORLD," understood simply of one who reveals the counsels of God, is without any example in Scripture. Neither the Old, nor the New Testament, is acquainted with it. The prophets made known the counsel of God; Moses, more fully than any of the

prophets; and the apoſtles, more clearly and delightfully than Moſes; yet neither Moſes, nor prophet, nor apoſtle, is ever called THE WORD.—The only expreſſion our adverſaries can produce, which bears any reſemblance to this, is that of Iſaiah; who, ſpeaking of John the Baptiſt, ſays; "The voice of him that crieth in the "wilderneſs." But to ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah's harbinger is here called *the voice* of Jeſus Chriſt, is an egregious miſtake. The ſacred oracle ſays no ſuch thing, nor ſuggeſts any ſuch idea. In the interpretation of this text, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilder-"neſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" the verb *is*, or *is heard*, muſt be ſupplied, the ſenſe of the text evidently requiring it. He that *is* in the wilderneſs, he that *preaches* in the wilderneſs, and he that *prepares* the way of the Lord, by exhortations to repentance, is John the Baptiſt. The voice mentioned in the oracle, is the voice of him that crieth, or preacheth in the wilderneſs, and ſays; "Make ſtraight in the deſart a high-way for "our God." It muſt, therefore, be the voice of John the Baptiſt. This voice, then, muſt be underſtood, either of the *preaching*, or of the *perſon* of John the Baptiſt. If the *former*, the text is impertinently cited by our oppoſers. If the *latter*, we attribute nonſenſe and abſurdity to the Holy Spirit; for the text will read thus: 'The perſon 'of John, is, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*'

The following expreſſions, "He was with God," as underſtood by the Socinians, are entirely without example. Where ſhall we find an inſtance of theſe, or ſimilar, terms, ſignifying, 'He was known of God 'only?' They, indeed, refer us to thoſe words, "The "Life was with the Father;" ſuppoſing them to mean, that it was known of the Father. But how jejune the ſenſe, how abſurd the interpretation? For is it credible that the apoſtle ſhould ſay nothing more of that LIFE, than might be ſaid of death and the devil, of ſin and damnation? for all theſe were known of God from eternity. Beſides, there is a material difference between

speaking thus of a *quality*, and using the same language of a *person*. If we should say, for instance, 'The law 'was with God;' and, 'Moses was with God;' the two propositions must be understood in a very different sense.

"The Word was God," is, if you will believe our adversaries, another figurative phrase; but you will not be able to find an example of it in Scripture. They pretend, that Jesus is called God, because he is Jehovah's representative. But though various eminent persons have, in some respects, represented the eternal Sovereign; yet we do not find that either of them was ever called God, absolutely; or without some intimation, that he was so denominated only in a figurative sense. It is, indeed, said, "Ye are Gods," in the plural; but it was never said of any particular person, 'He was God.'—They will have it that our gracious Redeemer is called God, because his ministry was entirely divine. But so was that of the apostles. They revealed a blessed immortality, and wrought very wonderful works, as well as their Lord; so that, on this principle, they might have claimed the glory of that Divine character as well as he. Yet we do not read that any of the apostles were so called; but we find, on the contrary, that they detested the conduct of the people at Lystra, who gave them that name.—'But there is a very material difference 'between Jesus and his apostles. He was the Master, 'they were the servants.' True: but though the apostles were servants, in respect of Christ; yet Christ, our adversaries must allow, is equally a servant, in regard to God. If, then, an apostle could not lawfully call himself LORD, out of reverence for Jesus Christ, that name being consecrated to him; neither could Jesus assume the name, GOD, because that sacred appellation had been long appropriated to the Supreme Being

Nor can they, by any example, justify that restriction with which they understand the following words; "All "things were made by him, and without him was not

"any thing made that was made." For the ſacred writer appears to have intended, to expreſs himſelf as *generally* as he poſſibly could. He, therefore, is not ſatisfied with ſaying, "All things were made by him;" but he repeats the important truth, in a ſtill more forcible manner, by adding, "Without him was not any thing "made that was made."—'The matter in hand, ſay 'they, limits the expreſſions.' But this aſſertion is groundleſs. Both the foregoing and the following words ſuggeſt the contrary; unleſs we renounce the natural impreſſion of the terms. In the preceding context he ſays, "In the beginning was the Word;" which is a general way of ſpeaking, and leads us to conſider the words, "All things were made," in a ſenſe equally general. In a ſubſequent verſe he ſays, "The world "was made by him;" where he again ſpeaks in a general way, and teaches us to conclude, that "all things," are to be underſtood of all things entirely; all, without exception.

Their interpretation of this clauſe, "The world was "made by him," is equally void of truth. For whether, by the term *world*, they underſtand the world to come; or whether they ſuppoſe the meaning to be, that the world was made *ours* by Jeſus Chriſt [illegible] her caſe they are utterly at a loſs for a ſimilar inſtance in the Holy Scripture. They, indeed, produce paſſages to ſhew that *the world*, ſometimes ſignifies *the world to come;* but the examples alleged are not to the purpoſe. They pretend that in this paſſage, "When he bringeth "his Firſt-begotten into the world," that the term *world* ſignifies eternal life. But the original phraſe ought not to be rendered, *the world;* but *the earth*, or the habitable part of the world; for it is τὴν οἰκουμένην, not τὸν κόσμον. Beſides, by what arguments will they prove that this habitable earth, means heaven, or a ſtate of bliſs to come?—Nor is that other paſſage, adduced by them*; where mention is made of "the world to

* Heb. ii. 5.

"come," sufficient for their purpose. For, whatever be the meaning of it, there is a manifest difference between those expressions, and this general phrase, *the world*; the latter being in question, and not the former. The two phrases are far from being equivalent. Nothing would be more absurd than to suppose, that *the world*, signifies *the world to come*, wherever the expressions are used, because the latter phrase is once or twice contained in the epistle to the Hebrews.—Neither is the following passage any more to their purpose. "When he cometh "into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou "wouldest not." For *the world*, here intended, must necessarily be understood of that which we inhabit, and not of the heavenly state. Nay, the term *world* is so far from being generally used for *heaven*, in the Scriptures, that the two expressions are frequently opposed. To this purpose are the words of our Lord; "I came "forth from the Father, and am come into the world; "again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

But in what sense was this world made by Jesus Christ? 'The world, that is, the world to come, was made by 'him, because, through him it becomes *ours*; or, by him 'we have an hope to obtain it, and shall certainly, in the 'end, enjoy it.' But what apostle, what prophet, what writer of common sense and common honesty, ever expressed himself in such an aukward, unintelligible and ridiculous manner, as that in which the evangelist speaks, according to this interpretation?—If you insist upon it, that the sense which they affix to the term *world*, is forced and unnatural, and that it signifies the heavens and the earth with all their inhabitants; then they endeavour to persuade you, that 'the word *made*, here 'signifies *renewed*.' The meaning, therefore, of the passage is, 'The world was *renewed* by Jesus Christ.' To give this interpretation an air of probability, they produce various passages of Scripture; but the only one that appears at all to the purpose, is the following: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto

"good works." Here, it is manifeſt, that the term *created* is limited to a particular ſenſe, and ſignifies *renewed*; as appears from the following clauſe, "unto good "works." Had the evangeliſt ſaid, The world was made, or created by him, in righteouſneſs, or to good works, or to be a new creature; the words, it muſt be confeſſed, would have required the ſenſe of our adverſaries. But as he ſays nothing like it, all the rules of ſound interpretation require, that we ſhould take the expreſſions in their obvious and natural ſignification.—If Paul in the paſſage produced, had only ſaid, "We are created by "Jeſus Chriſt;" and if, notwithſtanding he had meant the ſame as is now expreſſed; he would have uſed ſuch an obſcure and ambiguous way of ſpeaking, that we ſhould have hardly come at his meaning; or, moſt probably, have attributed a ſenſe to his words which he did not intend. So if John ſays, "The world was "made by Jeſus Chriſt," after having told us, that "all things were made by him," and that "without "him nothing was made that was made;" and if he ſay it only to inform us, that our Lord introduced an alteration into the world by his goſpel; we have reaſon to complain of great obſcurity in his language, and muſt either conſider his aſſertion as groundleſs, or embrace a ſenſe of the terms quite contrary to their natural ſignification.

Once more: It was never ſaid of any man that appeared in the world, "He was made fleſh;" ſuch a way of ſpeaking being abſurd. Yet, if we believe our opponents, this is the meaning of, "The Word was "made fleſh." That is, 'Jeſus a mere man, came 'into the world.' A goodly way of ſpeaking for an inſpired writer to uſe! But was it ever ſaid, The king was made fleſh—The emperor was made fleſh? Was it ever ſaid, by the Holy Spirit, Such a prophet, or ſuch an apoſtle, was made fleſh?—Nor does it avail the cauſe to render the text, "He was fleſh." For ſuch a way

of speaking is not more proper, and is equally unknown to both human and Divine language.

It follows, then, that all these expressions in the beginning of John's evangelical history, are without example, if understood according to the Socinian comment. But, supposing it could be proved that each of them was used in Scripture, once or twice, in the sense of our adversaries; yet so many singular forms of speech united, would be entirely without example, and contrary to all reason. For though a single expression, when used in an uncommon, or even an unnatural sense, may pass, in a croud of other expressions that are clear and pertinent, by which it may be understood; yet if a writer use ten or a dozen of them, in the compass of a few periods, he will render his language obscure and absurd, and himself contemptible.—It is unreasonable to suppose, that the general term, *beginning*, should be here taken, contrary to all use, for the commencement of the gospel. But if you should find an example of its being used in the sense they affix to it, among a multitude of instances to the contrary; it does not, it cannot follow from thence, that it must be understood in such a limited and particular signification here; because all the circumstances of the discourse lead us to consider it in a general sense, as the most natural. But when you offer this violence to that expression, you cannot do so to eight or ten more which immediately follow, without impeaching the wisdom, or the goodness, of the Spirit of God; as if he intended, by connecting so many expressions, which are all to be taken in a particular sense and contrary to their natural use, to lead us into error. Our opposers find their account in considering each expression by itself; because it is possible, by great application, to imagine some senses that are pretty near those which they affix to the words of Scripture. But when they are obliged to unite all their designs and explanations together, they make an absurd and ridiculous appearance.

Nor would it help their cauſe to ſuggeſt a doubt concerning the *Divine authenticity* of the beginning of John's evangelical hiſtory. For, in anſwer to ſuch an inſinuation, we need only obſerve; That the language of this evangeliſt expreſſes nothing, relating to the perſonal dignity, glory, and works of Jeſus, but what is taught us by other apoſtles. In the writings of Paul, for inſtance, we have the following aſſertions concerning Jeſus Chriſt. "Being in the form of God, he thought "it not robbery to be equal with God—He laid the "foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works "of his hands—By him were all things created, viſible "and inviſible—All things were created by him and for "him—God was manifeſt in the fleſh"—with many other ſimilar paſſages.

Equally unavailing would it be for them to philoſophize on the *manner how* the writings of the evangeliſts are the word of God. For whether it be by inſpiration of ſuggeſtion, or whether by way of ſuperintendency, or by both united, that God influenced the minds, and tongues, and pens of thoſe infallible teachers; yet it cannot be ſuppoſed that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and received miraculous gifts, only to talk as they do, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere creature. For, only admitting that they poſſeſſed a moderate ſhare of common ſenſe, and were honeſt and good men, though entirely deſtitute of extraordinary gifts; they could not but take particular care that they gave no occaſion to impiety and idolatry, by aſcribing the names, properties, and glories of the true God to a mere creature.

Should it be ſaid, 'Theſe grand expreſſions, concern-'ing Jeſus Chriſt, are no other than the flouriſhes of 'rhetoric and the elevated flights of fancy;' I anſwer, We may be ſoon convinced of the contrary, by a general reflection on the character of thoſe ſacred books, which conſtitute the canon of the Scripture. Not a ſingle expreſſion can be found in any of them, to the prejudice of God's glory. No impious metaphor, no hyperbole

tending to blasphemy, nor any unbecoming comparison of man with God, is there to be found. The language is humble, modest, religious. It is really surprising that, though other authors can hardly write a few pages without injuring the glory of God, this long series of holy teachers discover, in all their words and ideas, that respect which is due to the Supreme Being. This, as all must confess, is one of those internal characters by which the Bible is known to be the BOOK OF GOD.

Nor can it be objected, with any greater appearance of reason, 'That the idea of THE WORD, taken for the 'Son of God, who is God himself, being new and 'extraordinary; we are obliged to seek for new and 'singular senses in the passage.' For, as before observed, one singular expression and new idea, surrounded with other expressions and ideas, that are common and plain, cannot create any very great difficulty; and all the rest of the paragraph is composed of terms and thoughts that are neither uncommon nor obscure, while unembarrassed with forced and unnatural interpretations. Besides, it is well known that the ancient Hebrews used these several phrases, The face of God; the majesty of God; the glory of God; and the WORD of God, as expressive of the same idea. The Chaldee Paraphrase uses them as synonymous expressions. And Rabbi Jonathan renders these words, "The Lord said unto "my Lord;" by, 'The Lord said unto his WORD.' In short, it is plain that these words, with which the gospel according to John is introduced, "In the begin-"ning was the Word," carry in them a manifest allusion to the beginning of Genesis: this evangelist beginning the history of Jesus Christ, with the first works of the Son of God; giving us to understand, that he is the first Cause of all things, and that before the creation he was with God; while the other evangelists begin their interesting narratives with his manifestation in the flesh. The beloved disciple informs us, that THE WORD, by whom the world was created, was not a mere sound,

like the word of man; but a Divine perſon, who exiſted with God, and was God; and expreſsly tells us, that this Perſon is JESUS CHRIST.

Theſe conſiderations are ſufficient to remove the doubt, which ſome ſuggeſt, about the genuineneſs of the beginning of this goſpel: as if it favoured more of the wild ſpeculations of the Gnoſtics, than of revealed truth. For it appears from hence, that the ideas are not ſo new and ſtrange as they imagine.—Beſides, to ſuppoſe that Cerinthus compoſed, either the *beginning* of this goſpel, or the *Revelation*, is an ungrounded ſurmiſe. Not the *former;* for it ought not to be detached from the reſt, nor from John's epiſtles, nor from his Apocalypſe; in which theſe phraſes, *the Word; the Word of God;* and Jeſus Chriſt, *the true God*, are uſed repeatedly. Not the *latter;* for Cerinthus would never think it adviſable to forge and publiſh books under the name of his avowed oppoſer; nor would the churches of Aſia have received the abſurd imaginations of that heretic, for the goſpel of John.—Nor can any two things be more incompatible, than the doctrines of the evangeliſt, and the dogmas of that hereſiarch. Cerinthus believed, that angels created the world; that a fallen angel gave the law; and that Jeſus was really the ſon of Joſeph. He taught, that *Jeſus* was a man, and *Chriſt* the power of God; which power came upon him at his baptiſm, and returned to heaven at his death. He affirmed, that Jeſus ſuffered the inconveniences of life, and the violence of perſecution; but that *Chriſt* wrought ſtupendous miracles, and and was ſuperior to all oppoſition—That *Chriſt* was impaſſible, though Jeſus ſuffered; and that *Chriſt* fell upon the apoſtles, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt. I paſs over the crimes which he authorized, and the extravagant ſubordination of Æons; which were common to him with other Gnoſtics. Now theſe are ſuch notions as have not the leaſt countenance in the goſpel according to John. Why, then, theſe unreaſonable doubts and uſeleſs inquiries? If the paragraph under conſideration

must be suspected of being composed by a Gnostic, because it establishes the pre-existence and Divinity of Jesus Christ; we may, for the same reason, suspect the whole New Testament to be the work of those heretics, and reject it all at once.

CHAPTER X.

The Arian hypothesis equally indefensible.

ON a superficial survey of the Arian system, it seems much more plausible than that of Socinus; because it preserves entire the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, which is a doctrine most expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament: and, indeed, were we to stop here, the former would undoubtedly have the advantage. But when we more closely consider the subject we find, that the Socinian hypothesis is free from several capital difficulties which attend that of the Arians, those ancient enemies to the cause of truth and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. This will appear if the following things be considered.

The term GOD, must necessarily be understood, either as a name of *office*, or of *nature*; as denoting *external* qualities and trusts, or *intrinsic* excellence and *essential* perfections. The Arians, therefore, cannot defend themselves, when they are urged with the consideration of the name, GOD, which is given to Jesus Christ, by saying; 'It is a name of office, and Christ only bears 'it as an ambassador of the Most High;' which is the evasion of the Socinians. For as the disciples of Arius confess, that Christ existed, not only before his appearance in the world, but also before the creation; they cannot deny but he was, in some sense, GOD, before the

formation of the universe. Those passages of Scripture, which they explain of his pre-existance, are very express, in this respect. "In the beginning was the Word, and "and the Word was with God, and the Word was "God." But if they allow, that the Word was *with God*, in the beginning; and that he *was God*, before the formation of the world; they ought also to grant, that he was "in the form of God;" that he is "the "true God; the mighty God; the great God; God "blessed for ever." For there is no more reason to allow the one, than there is to acknowledge the other.

But, as they deny this consequence, they will permit me to ask, How the names and praises, which are appropriated to the Great Supreme, can belong to Christ in his first estate; in which he neither *represented* God, nor *acted* in his name, nor was his *ambassador* to men? For if he were a mere creature, however exalted and glorious, it could not be lawful to express his essence and attributes by the name, God. Can it be said, without impiety, of the most excellent creature, "He "exists in the form of God, and thinks it not robbery "to be equal with God;" Though the Logos, in his pre-existent state, possessed a Divine glory, in comparison *with us*; can we, on the Arian hypothesis, attribute a Divine glory to him, when considered as being *with* God? What, must he bear the name of that incomprehensible Being, who is infinitely more exalted above him, than the most excellent creature is above the meanest insect, or the smallest atom!—Instead, therefore, of saying, "He was in the form of God," before he humbled himself; we must affirm, that he was *always* in the form of a servant, in the form of a creature: and that *much more* in heaven, than when upon earth; much more *before* the creation of the world, than when he conversed with men. For with what perfections soever a creature may be endued, it is much more in the form of a servant, when in the immediate presence of God, than when among men. Instead, therefore,

of the sacred writers informing us, that Christ, in his first estate and when with his Father, *was God*; they should have said, that he was then, comparatively, *nothing*. As a nobleman, whose grandeur is very considerable, when in a country village; loses much of his splendour, when at the king's court and in the royal presence.

Again: Jesus Christ, considered in his first estate, and as with God, bears the name, GOD, either because he *is* God, or because he *acts* as God, or because he *represents* God. Not the *first*; for, on the Arian principles, he is a creature; and therefore, how excellent soever he be, he cannot, without falsehood, be described by a name consecrated to the Creator. Nor the *second*; for in his first state, before the creation, he did not act at all; or, if it were supposed that he did, it was only as the minister of God; and, consequently, he ought not to bear a name appropriated to the first Cause. Nor can it be the *last*; for he could not represent God to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, before they had an existence. Nor, when the angels were formed, had they any need of such a representation. For they see God face to face; that is, as much as is necessary to the plenitude of their holiness, happiness, and glory. Nor could he represent him to men; for, at the time supposed, they were not created. Besides, why, in order to represent God, must he bear his name? May not a superior be represented, without the person representing bear his peculiar character?—Here the Arians are greatly embarrassed; which embarrassment is much increased by considering, that Jesus bears the name, GOD, with distinguishing and sublime epithets. For he is called, the TRUE GOD; the MIGHTY GOD; the GREAT GOD; and GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.

Another difficulty attending the Arian hypothesis, is this: They cannot explain those passages of Scripture which assert, that Christ "made the worlds;" that he "created all things, visible and invisible;" that he "laid

"the foundations of the earth; and that the heavens are "the works of his hands; and that he upholds all things "by the word of his power;"—they cannot, I say, explain these, and similar passages, without contradicting themselves; by acknowledging his Divinity, properly so called, after they have denied it; or without running on the most evident absurdities. For as they understand those passages literally, which declare that God "made "all things by Jesus Christ;" and that "without him "was not any thing made that was made;" they are obliged to attribute to him the creation of heaven and earth, with all their inhabitants. It, therefore, necessarily follows, that the Word either made all things by his *own* power, as the sun enlightens the earth by his beams; or, having no inherent power for such a work, was the *mere instrument* by which the infinite power of God exerted itself; as the apostles, who had no power of their own, by which to work miracles, were only instruments in the hand of Omnipotence, to control the course of nature, and to astonish and bless the world. If the *latter*, we have reason to complain of being deceived by the language of Scripture, which says expressly; "All things were made by him." How unaccountable it is, that he should be called God, if he be only the instrument by which Divine power and wisdom display themselves! And, considering the care which the apostles take, to guard against a supposition that they wrought miracles by their own power; we cannot but think it exceeding strange, and as tending greatly to mislead our conceptions, in matters of the highest importance to the glory of God and the salvation of men, that they are not equally careful to inform us, That it was not by *his own* power that Jesus formed the universe and wrought his wonderful works. But, so far from it, they repeatedly declare, that their Divine Master is he "by whom "and for whom all things are"—That he "laid the "foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the "works of his hands"—That he "created all things

"visible and invisible;" from the loftiest angel that surrounds the throne, to the meanest worm that crawls in the dust. Now these, and such like expressions, it must be acknowledged, are very extravagant, if Jesus contributed no more to the production of the universe, than the apostles did to the miracles wrought by their instrumentality.—But if it be said, "Jesus formed the "creatures by his *own* power, which he received from "the Supreme Being;" then it follows, that the Father *communicated* to him the power of creating. But that is an *infinite* power; for it surmounts the infinite distance which is between *being* and *nothing*. Now infinite power is an infinite perfection; and, it is manifest, that an infinite perfection cannot be communicated to a creature, which is and must be finite in its powers and capacities. The supposition of the contrary is absurd, as it involves a contradiction: because it implies, that such a creature is both finite and infinite.

Again: If Jesus Christ, being only an exalted creature, did create all things; he must be considered, either as an *instrumental* cause, or as the *principal* cause. Not the *former;* for no instrument can act but where there is an object, and such an one to which it is in some measure proportioned. But, in the work of creation, there is no object on which to act; the work itself producing the object. If the *latter*, he is the Creator; he possesses an infinite power; he is truly and properly God. For if he be invested with infinite power, why not with unerring wisdom and supreme goodness? Why not with every perfection of the Deity?

Further: Either Jesus Christ acted *alone*, in the creation of all things, or in *conjunction* with his Father. If the *former*, why is the formation of the world ever attributed to the Father? If the *latter*, either he exerted the same, or a different power. If the *same*, it was an infinite power; for such is the Father's. If a *different* power, it was created and finite. But as Omnipotence needs no coadjutor, (to will, and to create, being the

same with God) so the supposition of a *finite* power giving existence to the universe, and the idea of a *created* Creator, are the first-born of absurdities. Nothing more offensive, nothing more shocking to common sense, than the thought of a creature *creating* the world; yet with such inconsistencies is the Arian system attended, and such absurdities do its abettors digest.

Once more: On the Arian hypothesis, it is impossible to defend Moses and the patriarchs, from a charge of idolatry; in worshipping, as the true God, the angel who appeared to them so often. Because they cannot say, with the Socinians, 'That this angel was not 'worshipped on account of his own excellence, but 'because he represented God; and that, detached from 'his exalted office and ministry, he was not worthy of 'more honour than any other of those heavenly intelli-'gences.' For this angel, according to them, was THE WORD; whom the evangelist teaches us to consider, as existing from the beginning with God, and as being God. So that all the honours he claimed and received from the ancient patriarchs, must be looked upon as due to his own perfections: and, consequently, we are taught to apply to an angel those oracles which had for their object the eternal God—To apply to the servant, what is peculiar to his Lord; to a subject, what is due only to the Sovereign. But this consideration will be resumed hereafter.

CHAPTER XI.

The Language of the Holy Spirit, on the Socinian hypothesis, is obscure, absurd, and not consistent with piety.

AS to the *obscurity* of Scripture, on the principles of the Socinians, it is so apparent that I need not spend any more time in proving it; I shall, therefore, only inquire into the occasion of it. The obscurity we find in many passages of sacred Writ, is reducible to one or another of the following heads. Let us now see, whether the darkness and difficulties attending those texts, which are controverted between us and our opponents, be referable to any of them.

In many parts of the Scripture there is an obscurity attending, which arises from *the nature* of the things proposed to us. To this head belong the difficulties with which we meet in those passages of Scripture which relate to the nature of God; the mystery of the incarnation; the decrees of election and reprobation; the satisfaction of Jesus Christ; the eternity of those torments which await the wicked; and all those great and sublime subjects, which are incomprehensible by man, except *they* cease to be what they are, or *he* cease to be what he is.—But we cannot reduce to this principle the obscurity which our adversaries find, in the passages before mentioned. For there is not, there cannot be, any great mystery in a creature revealing the counsel of God. It is no surprising thing for a man to live at the time when the gospel-dispensation commenced, or in the time of John the Baptist; to be known of God only; to be appointed to a more glorious ministry than that of the prophets; or for a man to be made flesh, that is, to partake of a corporal nature. It was no very wonderful thing, according to the interpretation adopted by our opponents, which Jesus asserted, when he said of himself;

'I was, in appointment, before Abraham—I poſſeſſed 'a glory with the Father, before the world was; 'becauſe it was determined, in the Divine decree, that 'I ſhould poſſeſs it.'

Another cauſe of obſcurity in the ſacred Writings, is, The *darkneſs* which was brought on our minds, by the firſt grand apoſtaſy. "If our goſpel be hid, it is hid "to them that are loſt; in whom the god of this "world hath blinded the minds of them that believe "not—The natural man diſcerneth not the things of "the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." We ſhould, therefore, examine ourſelves and ſee, whether the obſcurity of which we complain, ſpring from our own depravity. It might, indeed, be juſtly ſuſpected to ariſe from this quarter, in reference to the controverted texts, if *we* were the perſons who found them obſcure; but as it is chiefly our oppoſers, *they* ought to acknowledge the obſcurity. For in our ſenſe, the *object* is ſublime and myſterious, but the *language* plain and familiar: in theirs, the object is well proportioned to our capacities, but the language is obſcure and perplexed. —Further: Are we, or our adverſaries—let common ſenſe judge—Are we or our adverſaries, the perſons who are chargeable with a ſecret deſire of giving an unnatural turn to theſe paſſages, in favour of our own opinion; and with acting under the influence of evil paſſions, in finding out entirely new and very extraordinary ſenſes? What miſtake, what irregularity can there be in ſuppoſing that theſe expreſſions, "In the begin-"ning," are to be underſtood in a general ſenſe? Or that theſe, "The Word was God," include ſomething more exalted and more Divine than the glory of a mere ſervant? Or that theſe words, "By him all things were "made, and without him was not any thing made that "was made;" ſignify ſomething more, than preaching the goſpel, reforming the world, and the effects which followed? Or that theſe, "Before Abraham was, I "am," include an aſſertion and commendation of

personal excellence, which do not agree to the meanest of rational creatures? Who, I ask, is able to fix and to prove a charge of mistake upon us, or of any extravagance, for thus thinking of such passages as these?

Again: The *genius* of the original tongues, which, in some cases, is very different from ours, is another cause of obscurity. It is granted, however, that this is not the source of those difficulties with which we meet in the passages disputed between us. The genius of the sacred language is far from leading us to invest a mere creature with the most glorious characters of the Creator. To this it is quite averse. Other languages have something heathenish and impious in them. They do not scruple to use the terms, *adorable*, *divine*, *sacrifice*, *incense*, *eternity*, and *supreme good*, when speaking of a creature. But the language of inspiration, being the language of GOD, never prostitutes terms of such sacred significancy to little or base purposes; is always sober, religious, and consistent with itself. The penmen of Scripture, it is true, sometimes use hyperboles; but never such as can injure the glory of God.

Further: The Scripture is obscure in reference to events which are yet in the womb of *futurity*. Great perspicuity, in prophecy, might impede the accomplishment of it. No body wonders, for instance, that things should be involved in enigmatical figures, in the visions of Ezekiel, so as to render his discourses obscure; because they are the secrets of futurity. But, in the expressions before us, there is no prophecy. They, in general, refer to the time past. Such as, "Before "Abraham was, I am. In the beginning was the "Word. The word was with God. The Word "was God." The obscurity, therefore, of which our opponents complain, cannot arise from this source.

Once more: A *false philosophy*, or a misapplication of that which is true, is another occasion of obscurity in many passages of Scripture. Various texts, in the Old and in the New Testament, though clear in themselves,

have been much obscured by scholastic and philosophical comments. Yet even this cannot be the source of those difficulties which our adversaries find, in the passages controverted between them and us. For the question is not about any obscurity in the words of the Holy Spirit, as explained according to *our* sentiments; but as interpreted according to *theirs*. And they pretend, that their hypothesis is quite free from the cloudy and embarrassing subtilties of the schools; yet, it is on their principles that these passages are so exceedingly difficult and obscure.

This, then, is an obscurity which has none of those causes that are common to difficult passages of Scripture; which is very surprising. But this surprise will increase, when it is considered, that as the obscurity has not its cause in us, nor can be reasonably ascribed to us, it must be attributed to God. But if He be the only cause, it will be impossible for us to account for it, with honour to his character. For his design in it could not be to *glorify* himself. Because an obscurity in his Revelation, which leads us to believe that Jesus, a mere man, is GOD; that he created the world; and is invested with the essential glories of the Supreme Being, cannot possibly tend to the honour of God.—Nor could his design be to *illuminate* the minds of men. For how should an obscurity enlighten the mind? Besides, was there no other way of communicating heavenly light, without exposing mankind to the danger of so baneful an error?—Nor was it to *try our faith*. For though the greatness of the objects revealed in the Bible, and the contrariety which is in them to our natural prejudices, may serve to exercise our faith; yet it does not appear that ambiguous and obscure expressions, if employed to represent those objects, could answer any such purpose. And though the Holy Spirit had intended to put our faith to the trial; he certainly would have been very far from doing it in such a way, as had a natural tendency to injure the glory of God and hazard our salvation, by suggesting such

ideas as opened a door to blaſphemy and idolatry. If, notwithſtanding, the Spirit of inſpiration really deſigned, that the paſſages in queſtion ſhould be underſtood in the ſenſe of our adverſaries, he has been greatly diſappointed; for there have been comparatively few that have ſo conſidered them, or whoſe faith has been ſo exerciſed by them.

The hypotheſis of our opponents not only renders the language of Scripture obſcure, but alſo *falſe* and *deceitful*. A diſcourſe is generally conſidered as falſe, when thoſe ideas which common conſent and cuſtom have affixed to the terms of which it conſiſts, are not found to be true; even though the ſpeaker, or writer, ſhould annex, mentally, a ſignification to each word, ſo as to render the whole conſiſtent with fact. For equivocations and latent reſervations are a ſpecies of lyes; though, in the ſenſe of thoſe that make them, they may be real truths.—Now it is demonſtrable, that the ſentiments of our oppoſers render the language of Scripture deceitful. For if it be lawful to give the ſacred Records a ſenſe that is remote from the ordinary ſignification of the terms which are uſed, there is no opinion ſo abſurd, no doctrine ſo monſtrous, but may be eaſily eſtabliſhed by the Bible.

Admitting the lawfulneſs of ſuch a procedure, it would be no hard matter for me to prove, that the true God had no hand in the work of creation; nay, that there is no mention of any ſuch thing in the ancient oracles. Even ſuch a ſentiment, horrid as it is, I could maintain, without offering greater violence to the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, than our adverſaries do to thoſe of the New.—I would aſſert, that he who created the heavens and the earth was an *angel*, the miniſter of Jehovah; one who is not God, by nature, but merely by office. If reminded of the *names* given him in Scripture; I would anſwer with the Socinians, He bears them only as he is the miniſter and repreſentative of the Moſt High. The epithet *almighty*, which is

ſometimes given him, would not much embarraſs me. I ſhould ſay, this angel does all things in our lower world, by the will of the Great Supreme, who has committed the adminiſtration of its government to him; but there are other worlds, *ad infinitum*, which do not, in the leaſt, come under his control. And though he is called "the ſearcher of hearts;" yet he bears the auguſt character, only becauſe the Moſt High God reveals to him every thing that paſſes in the ſoul. He is, indeed, ſaid to have "created all things;" but theſe words are to be underſtood with great limitation: not of all things without exception; but only of ſuch as reſpect us, or belong to this viſible world. He was, I confeſs, *worſhipped*; and worſhip has been conſidered as an honour peculiar to the true God: but there is a very important diſtinction which is here to be made, between *ſupreme* and *ſubordinate* worſhip. And ſhould it be ſaid, This dependence of the angel, who is called God, upon the Supreme Being, is no where mentioned in Scripture; I ſhould ſoon produce inſtances to the contrary. As for example: "The Lord rained upon Sodom—brimſtone and fire, *from* the Lord." And thoſe words to Abraham, ſpoken by him who is called GOD; "Now I know that thou feareſt GOD." And ſo when the God of Iſrael is repreſented, as the greateſt "among the gods;" may we not conſider him as the greateſt among the angels, to whom the Infinite Supreme has committed the government of ſeveral parts of the univerſe? which would imply, that the God of Iſrael is not the Supreme God. In vain would it be objected, That the God of Iſrael is the creator of heaven and earth; and that the act of creating ſuppoſes an infinite power, which cannot belong to any but the Moſt High. For our adverſaries furniſh me with a ſolution of this difficulty, by ſhewing that the term *creavit* does not always ſignify *to produce out of nothing*; but merely to *produce*; and ſometimes, to *faſhion*, to *diſpoſe*.—If it were objected, The God of Iſrael ſpeaks as the true

God when he says, "I will not give my glory to "another;" it might be answered, The angel who has received the government of this world, has a glory peculiar to himself, exclusive of other intelligences, and possesses this glory in opposition to idols, which are vanity.—It might be further supposed, that the true God has granted him the power of communicating to another, so much of his empire as he pleases; and, therefore, he could impart it to Jesus Christ, as the true God did to him.—Now I leave our adversaries to judge, whether it would be easy for them to force me in these entrenchments, which they have prepared; and to consider, of what vast importance it is, never to deprive the terms of Scripture of their *natural* signification. Because if we once take the liberty of affixing new ideas, to the words *God*, *worship*, and such like expressions, we destroy all certainty in the analogy of faith and in the sacred Scripture, and abandon ourselves to perpetual scepticism.

As Jehovah is the God of truth, it cannot be supposed, without shocking impiety, that he ever designed to betray us into error, by speaking to us in ambiguous and deceitful language. If, then, such a procedure would be considered as contrary to his eternal truth; it is no less inconsistent with his wisdom, nor less derogatory to the dignity of his Revelation, to speak in language that is absurd and ridiculous. Yet such is the language of the Bible, in many places, if understood according to the principles of our opposers.

What expressions, for instance, can be more ridiculous than these, if Christ be a mere man, honoured with the name, God, on account of his ministry? "He was "made of the seed of David, according to the flesh?" What is the meaning of the term, *flesh?* If you understand it, as opposed to *spirit*, the sense of the passage will be, He was made of the seed of David, according to the *body;* not according to the *soul.* A goodly way of speaking, this, for Gamaliel's pupil, for Christ's

apostle to use! Alexander had a body and a soul; yet all would unite in pronouncing that man contemptibly weak, who should say; Alexander was made of the seed of Philip, *according to the flesh.* Nay, the language would be absurd in the mouth of one, who believes the conqueror of the world to be the son of Jupiter. For such an one should say; Alexander was *not* the son of Philip: not, He was the son of Philip, *according to the flesh.* —It may, perhaps, be said, 'These words, "according "ing to the flesh," are opposed, not to the *nature* of 'Christ, but to his *heavenly offices* and *divine ministry:* "and the meaning is, Jesus was made of the seed of 'David, not as he is God, or as he is honoured with "a divine ministry; but as he is man, or possessed of "a corporal nature.' But Peter was the son of Zebedee, not as an apostle, but as a man; his apostleship being a divine office, and coming immediately from God. Yet this proposition, Peter was made of the seed of Zebedee, according to the flesh, would be ridiculous.—'The text "under consideration may imply, that Jesus Christ had "a nobler origin than other men, having been conceived "by the Holy Spirit." But it is not the power *by which,* but the matter *of which,* he was made, that is intended by these words, "He was made, according to the flesh;" Again: Jesus was made of the seed of David, and made flesh, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This proposition, therefore, "He was made of the seed of David, "according to the flesh;" is, in the sense of Scripture, equivalent to this; He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, by the Holy Ghost. And if so, we are still at a loss for the meaning of, "He was made, "according to the flesh." For if Christ be a mere man, by nature, these expressions, "according to the flesh," are perfectly ridiculous.

Equally absurd, on the Socinian hypothesis, is that celebrated saying of our Lord's; "And now, O Father, "glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory "which I had with thee before the world was." If

you expound these words, of the glory which Jesus had in the *Divine decree*; you render the expressions absurd, being contrary to the common forms of speech. For it is as if a man should say; 'Give me, Lord, the health 'which I had with thee before the world was—Feed 'me, O Father, with my daily bread, with which I was 'fed in thy presence before the world was created— 'Grant, O gracious God, that I may safely arrive at 'that celestial place, where I was with thee before the 'foundation of the world.'—Many other instances might be adduced of that ridiculous air which the Socinian sentiment gives to the language of inspiration, but these may suffice.

The same perverse hypothesis renders the language of Scripture *impious* and *blasphemous*. This impiety has various degrees. For instance; The sacred writers, when speaking of Jesus Christ, take no care to avoid such expressions as might give occasion to blasphemy. Of which number are these, *God; equal with God; the Creator of all things; worship*, and others of a similar kind, which were never piously used but to express the glory of the Eternal Sovereign.—Again: They represent Jesus Christ as using these expressions, in connection with others, which imply an excessive and criminal familiarity with God, if he be not of the same essence with him. As when he calls himself, *the Son*, the *own Son*, and the *only Son of God*; asserting, that God is *his Father*, not occasionally, and so as to insinuate that he claims the divine relation only in a figurative sense; but frequently, in the most solemn discourses, and that without any limitation: saying, *my Father*, when an apostle would have said, *my God*; plainly signifying, that he assumes the exalted title in a literal and proper sense.—Further: This impiety appears, to a shocking degree, in the writers of the New Testament placing a creature on an equality with the Creator, by such expressions as these' "He thought it not robbery to "be equal with God—Philip, he who hath seen me,

" hath ſeen the Father." As if he who beholds the glimmering of a glow-worm, ſaw the ſplendor of the meridian ſun! And by attributing to Jeſus, a mere man, the ſame authority as they do to the Father, in the great commiſſion which was given to the apoſtles. " Go ye, " therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the " name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy " Ghoſt." As if one ſhould ſay, Go and enrol the people by the order of the king and his ſlave!—A ſtill further degree of impiety conſiſts in this; When the penmen of Scripture expreſs the honour which is due to Jeſus Chriſt, they do it by the general term *worſhip*, without ever giving the leaſt intimation that it means a *ſubordinate* worſhip, or that there is any ſuch thing: though, on the principles of our opponents, there is as great a difference between ſupreme and ſubordinate adoration, as there is between the Creator and the creature; and though it be certain, that if a man ſhould frequently give the title of *majeſty* to any one but the king, he would be highly culpable in the eye of his ſovereign, whatever mental diſtinction he might make between ſupreme and ſubordinate majeſty; becauſe terms have their ſignification principally from general cuſtom, not from the particular fancy of the perſon who uſes them.—Once more: The apoſtles inveſt a mere creature with the *qualities*, and attribute to him the *works*, of the great Creator. Nay, which is carrying impiety to the higheſt degree, if the hypotheſis of our oppoſers be true, they boldly apply to a mere man the *ſubliméſt oracles* of the Old Teſtament; thoſe oracles which were intended to expreſs, in the moſt emphatical manner, the *infinite glories* of the Moſt High. But this argument ſhall be the ſubject of the following Section.

SECTION IV.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, there is no harmony between the prophets and the apoſtles, or between the Old Teſtament and the New.

CHAPTER I.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the ſame eſſence with his Father, the Prophets, who ſpake of him, did not foreſee things as they were to come to paſs.

AS the religion of Jeſus depends on the teſtimony of the prophets, and on that of the apoſtles, united; it is abſolutely neceſſary, for the confirmation of our faith, that theſe teſtimonies ſhould agree and mutually ſupport each other. An hypotheſis, therefore, which deſtroys that agreement which ought to ſubſiſt between the penmen of the Old, and the writers of the New Teſtament, ſaps the foundations of Chriſtianity. Such is the ſyſtem of thoſe who maintain, that Jeſus Chriſt is a mere creature. For if that ſentiment be true, the Spirit, by whoſe inſpiration the prophets wrote, neither foretold, nor foreſaw things as they were to come to paſs under the goſpel-diſpenſation; nor did that Spirit, whom the apoſtles received and by whoſe direction they ſpake, underſtand the oracles of the Old Teſtament — To prove the *former* of theſe propoſitions, we need only conſider, In what manner the prophets deſcribe the true

God—How they represent the Messiah—On what fundamental truths they establish the Jewish religion—And with what circumstances they describe the establishment of the New Covenant, and the calling of the Gentiles.

The prophets describe the *true God*, by titles which they give to him, exclusive of all other beings. To distinguish him from all his creatures, and to assert his infinite superiority over them, those amanuenses of heavenly wisdom call him; THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH—THE FIRST AND THE LAST—THE KING OF GLORY—THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS—THE SAVIOUR AND REDEEMER—THE JUDGE, LAWGIVER, AND KING—And, THE MOST HIGH.—Here it is to be observed, that these are not only the characters of the true God, but they are such characters as are *peculiar* to him; such in which no creature has a share. For He *only* is the Most High: He *only* knoweth the hearts of the children of men: He *only* blotteth out transgression for his own sake: He *only* is the Saviour and the Redeemer of Israel; for He expressly declares there is *none else*.—It ought also to be remarked, that these characters are such as principally distinguish the Creator from the creature; and that it would be very difficult, either to invent, or to meet with others in the sacred Records, by which the important distinction could be more strongly marked, or appear with greater clearness. For there is the utmost reason to conclude, that these are the titles which JEHOVAH chose, by which to distinguish himself from all other beings.

Yet these titles are all given to Jesus Christ, in the New Testament. Of Him it is said, "Thou, Lord, "in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, "and the heavens are the works of thy hands." He is called, repeatedly, "The First and the Last." He expressly claims the prerogative, of "searching the "reins and the heart." He is called by Zacharias, "the Highest," or the Most High; before whose face

John the Baptiſt went. He is the "King of kings, "and the Lord of lords." He is "the Saviour," and he is "our Judge."

But if theſe titles belong to Jeſus Chriſt, what was the reaſon that the prophets gave them to the God of Iſrael, as *peculiar* to him, and *incommunicable?* Did not thoſe holy men foreſee that they would be applied to a mere creature; who, how excellent ſoever, muſt be conſidered as infinitely below the eternal God? What, is there nothing in all thoſe grand characters and ſublime deſcriptions of the Deity, contained in the Old Teſtament, but what is equivocal, and was to be applied to Jeſus, a mere creature, as well as to the infinite JEHOVAH! When the Holy Spirit informs us, in the ancient oracles, that the Great, the True, the Eternal God, poſſeſſes theſe characters as his own peculiar; what can we think, but that the Spirit of inſpiration either did not *foreſee* the glory of Jeſus Chriſt, who was to bear theſe Divine titles; or, if he foreſaw it, that he intended to betray us into an error; which confounds the creature with the Creator?

Theſe horrid ſuſpicions will be increaſed, if we conſider the characters of the *Meſſiah*. If He who inſpired the prophets did not foreſee what would come to paſs, after the appearance of the Meſſiah; what the effects of his doctrine would be; how it would be condemned of impiety, by the Jews; how they would proſecute Jeſus to death, under a charge of blaſphemy, for claiming an equality with God; and that his diſciples would make him the object of their worſhip;—if, I ſay, He by whoſe inſpiration the prophets wrote and ſpake, did not foreſee theſe things, he could not be the Spirit of Him who is omniſcient. And if he did foreſee them, we have reaſon to wonder, and it is hard to forbear complaining, that, inſtead of taking proper precautions to *prevent* the errors and idolatry which he foreſaw, he took the moſt *direct way* to give birth and encouragement to them. For what elſe could he intend by calling the Meſſiah, "GOD WITH US; THE MIGHTY GOD; JEHOVAH

" OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; THE GOD AND SAVIOUR " OF THE WHOLE EARTH; THE LORD THAT " SHOULD SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE?"

'But though the Meſſiah is called, "God with us," 'and, "Jehovah our righteouſneſs;" yet he is not 'called GOD, abſolutely. Beſides, theſe two characters 'only ſignify, that God, by the Meſſiah, would be 'with men, ſo as to grant them the ſpecial marks of his 'favour; and that, by him, he would juſtify and ſave 'them.'—But we do not here argue from the *force* of the expreſſions, but from the *wiſdom* and the *deſign* of the Holy Spirit who uſed them. Though it were not the Spirit of God, but a man of common prudence and piety, who acted on this occaſion; we cannot imagine, if he foreſaw that men would fall into ſuch a miſtake as to commit idolatry, by treating a mere creature as if he were the true God, that he would ever think of deſcribing Jeſus Chriſt by ſuch characters as thoſe before us. If our adverſaries could put themſelves in the place of the prophets, and were, by Jehovah's order, to form an anticipated model of the Chriſtian religion; *they* would take particular care not to deſcribe the expected Meſſiah after this manner.

'It is not ſo ſurpriſing, perhaps they may ſay, that 'the prophets ſhould ſpeak thus of a man, to whom 'they knew God would communicate his name and 'glory.'—But if that had been the reaſon of their conduct, it is unaccountably ſtrange, that they ſhould ſo frequently inculcate the following truths, as the *fundamental principles* of their religion. "The gods that made not the "heavens, ſhall periſh from the earth—I will not give "my glory to another—Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord "thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve—He that "ſwareth on the earth, ſhall ſwear by the God of truth" Truths theſe, eſſential to the Jewiſh religion, and quite inconſiſtent with the idea of a ſubordinate and dependent God.

The truth of the propoſition we here endeavour to confirm, will be ſtill more evident if we conſider, *With what circumſtances* the prophets deſcribe the calling of the Gentiles and the eſtabliſhment of the New Covenant, by Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe grand events are deſcribed by the following characteriſtics. *An univerſal and exuberant joy.* "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I "create: for behold I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing and "her people a joy—Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O "earth, and break forth into ſinging, O mountains!" And, as if inanimate creatures were ſuddenly to poſſeſs the powers of reaſon, in order to ſhare in the pleaſure and praiſe, the prophets declare, that the iſles and the ſea, the earth and the mountains, the foreſts and the deſarts, ſhall ſhout for joy.—*God's dwelling among men.* "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! for lo, I "come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the "LORD. Behold YOUR GOD will come—He will come "and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be "opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. "Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the "tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing."—*The exaltation of God.* "The LORD ALONE ſhall be exalted in that day."—*The deſtruction of idols.* "The gods, that made not "the heavens, ſhall periſh—The idols he ſhall utterly "aboliſh—From all your idols will I cleanſe you.

If the Spirit, by whom the prophets uttered and penned their predictions, foreſaw things as they were to come to paſs; then he knew very well, that he deſcribed the calling of the Gentiles and the eſtabliſhment of the New Covenant, in ſuch a manner as would never be verified—He knew, that the goſpel, while it deſtroyed one ſpecies of idolatry, would introduce another more dangerous. For if we compare the Chriſtian idolatry, which makes an idol of Jeſus Chriſt, by ſetting him on the throne of the Supreme Being, with the idolatry of the Heathens; we ſhall find that the latter has the advantage of being the *leſs dangerous*, in ſeveral reſpects.

The Pagan idolatry was *grossly absurd*, and unworthy of understanding persons; but the Christian idolatry is *spiritual* and much more plausible. The former sprang from an *abuse* of natural light; the latter from the most *natural use* we can make of written Revelation. For what use more natural, than to understand its expressions in their common and well-known signification? The Pagan idolatry was repeatedly and peremptorily *forbidden*, by the Holy Ghost, from age to age; forbidden under the most awful penalties, and in the most alarming way, both in the Old and the New Testament; whereas the Christian idolatry is a mischief which the Spirit of prophecy either did not *at all foresee*, or, foreseeing, used *no means to prevent*; but rather, by various forms of expression, to encourage and authorize. The former did not run so high, as to *equal* their subordinate divinities with Jupiter, their supreme god; but the latter consists in treating Jesus, a mere creature, as the Most High. Though the *Heathens* worshipped several gods, yet they did not consider them as possessed of infinite perfection; whereas *Christians* believe it of Jesus Christ. God's *jealousy* also is sooner provoked, by investing a very excellent creature with his attributes and glory, than by transferring his Divine honours to one that is mean and base; because the consequences are more dangerous to the interest of men and the glory of God. The *Christian* idolatry, therefore, being a more plausible evil, is more pernicious, than that of the *Heathens*.

Either, then, the Spirit who inspired the prophets, did not foresee things as they were to be; or he knew that the calling of the Gentiles would not be signalized by the destruction of idols: but, on the contrary, that a more absurd and less dangerous idolatry, would give way to one more refined and more destructive, that would soon overspread the world—that the desire of the nations, would become the idol of the people; and that the very name, which was to be given among men, and by which

they were to be ſaved, would become, for many ages and over all the earth, a name of blaſphemy.—Conſequently, God has been ſo far from being *exalted*, under the new diſpenſation, by the abaſement of men; that, at its commencement, he himſelf began to be *abaſed*, by the exaltation of the man Jeſus: becauſe the exaltation of Chriſt occaſioned the apoſtles to compare him with God, and boldly to aſcribe to him an equality with God, by inveſting him with all the prerogatives and titles of the Great Supreme. The prophets, therefore, had no great reaſon to rejoice, in the proſpect of the goſpel and its reception in the world; ſince, by its moſt natural impreſſions, it betrays men into idolatry.—To which I may add, were the ſentiment of our adverſaries true, God would be much leſs preſent in the Chriſtian church, than he was in the ancient ſanctuary: for he was there in the cloud of glory over-ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat, in a very illuſtrious manner; but our opponents will not allow Jeſus Chriſt to be any more than a man. The Spirit of inſpiration, therefore, inſtead of making "God's "dwelling with men," one of the characteriſtics of goſpel-times, would have ſpoken more agreeably to fact if he had ſaid; Under the New Covenant, God ſhall not vouchſafe the illuſtrious tokens of his intimate preſence, to ſo great a degree, as he did to the ancient Iſraelitiſh church.

Thus the characters of the true God, which are drawn by the ancient prophets; the characters of the Meſſiah, recorded in the Old Teſtament; the fundamental principles of the Jewiſh worſhip; and the circumſtances which were to attend the eſtabliſhment of the New Covenant and the calling of the Gentiles, all conſpire to ſhew, That the Spirit of prophecy either did not foretel events, as they were to come to paſs; or that the ſyſtem of our opponents is falſe.

CHAPTER II.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, either the Apostles did not understand the Prophets, or they designed to betray us into error.

AS the hypothesis of those who consider Jesus Christ as a mere creature, casts a foul reflection on the predictions of the ancient prophets; so, by unavoidable consequence, it obliges us to conclude, That though the apostles made the Old Testament the foundation of their whole doctrine, by constantly appealing to it; and though they received the Holy Ghost whose province it was to lead them into the true sense of it; yet, after all, they did not understand it. The truth of this proposition we shall endeavour to prove in the following paragraphs; by considering a few of those passages in the Old Testament, which the apostles apply to Jesus Christ in the New.

The eloquent Isaiah says, "The voice of him that "crieth in the wilderness, PREPARE YE THE WAY OF "JEHOVAH, MAKE STRAIGHT IN THE DESART A "HIGH-WAY FOR OUR GOD." Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, and applying this oracle to his infant son, cites and expounds it thus: "And thou, child, "shalt be called the prophet of THE HIGHEST: for "thou shalt go before the face of THE LORD to prepare "his ways."—In both these oracles, it is evident, these exalted characters, JEHOVAH, OUR GOD, THE HIGHEST, and THE LORD, are applied to the same glorious Person. And it is equally certain, from the constant application of them by the sacred writers, that they are peculiar to God. Consequently, if they belong to Jesus Christ, he must be a Divine Person, of the same essence with his Father, and the Most High.

That all these adorable names really belong to our Lord, appears from their being applied to him by the unerring Spirit. For he, before whose face John the Baptist was to go, is Jesus Christ. It must be either He, or God the Father. Not the Father; for either these words, "Thou shalt go before the face of the "Lord," are to be understood in a *proper* sense; in such a manner as the Lord was to come properly to men; agreeable to that saying, "Your GOD will come "—and save you:" or they are to be taken *figuratively*; and only signify, that God would visit mankind in an extraordinary way, either in justice, or in mercy; and that John should be instrumental in preparing the way to Divine mercy, by bringing them to repentance. If the *former*, the oracle cannot agree to God the Father; for he did not come properly to men. If the *latter*, John did not walk before the face of the Lord; except in the same sense as Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and denounced the judgments of God on a sinful generation: or as Moses, who spake to Pharaoh that he should let the people go; and to the Israelites, persuading them to believe what was revealed to him; thus preparing the way to God's mercy, in the redemption of Israel, and to his justice, in the punishment of his enemies. But if so, we must seek the accomplishment of the prediction, not in John, but in Christ. For if the communication of Divine benefits be intended, by God's coming to his people; he came the most remarkably when he baptized the apostles with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and when, by their ministry, he converted the nations; for then did his "law go "forth from Zion, and his word from Jerusalem" If the inflicting of judgments be meant; then God came, in the most signal and terrible manner, when he sent the Roman legions to destroy the unbelieving Jews, with their city and temple. But then it was not John, but Christ, who principally prepared the way, in both these respects. For he prepared the way to divine mercy,

by his preaching and miracles, his ſufferings and death. He revealed the pardoning love of God, and confirmed the everlaſting covenant. The miniſtry of John was of ſhort duration, and the preaching of the apoſtles produced much greater effects than his. To ſuppoſe, however, that Jeſus Chriſt, not John the Baptiſt, was the forerunner deſcribed by the prophet, is abſurd to the laſt degree; yet ſuch is the conſequence, if the paſſage be interpreted in a figurative ſenſe.

If, then, this oracle was not fulfilled by the coming of the Father, it muſt have received its accompliſhment in the appearance of his Son. In the language of the prophets, therefore, Jeſus Chriſt bears thoſe venerable, thoſe truly Divine names, JEHOVAH; OUR GOD; THE HIGHEST; and, THE LORD; for ſuch are the characters of Him before whoſe face John the Baptiſt went. He is, conſequently, the true God.

The next ancient oracle that I ſhall conſider, is that which is quoted in the epiſtle to the Hebrews; where it is produced to ſhew, what an immenſe difference there is, between Jeſus Chriſt and the angels. "Thou, LORD, "in the beginning, haſt laid the foundation of the earth, "and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They "ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt; and they all ſhall "wax old, as doth a garment; and as a veſture ſhalt "thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but "Thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail."— Theſe words were undoubtedly ſpoken, by the pſalmiſt, of the true God; the prophets having ſo often informed us, that he only made the heavens and the earth. Beſides, the preceding words cannot be underſtood of any but JEHOVAH. Either, then, the inſpired writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, did not underſtand the paſſage he produced; or he knew that the immutable, the eternal God was deſcribed by it: for the ſublime characters contained in it are ſo peculiar to him, that there is no inſtance of the prophets applying them to any other. So that when the inſpired author applies them to Jeſus Chriſt,

he muſt either conſider him as of the ſame eſſence with the Father; or elſe he ſpeaks againſt his conſcience, to advance his Maſter's honour, and betrays the intereſts of God's glory.

To ſay, with the Socinians, 'That he does not apply 'theſe words to the great Redeemer; but that, digreſſing 'from his former ſubject, he makes a ſhort apoſtrophe 'to God the Father;' is to declare, not the meaning of the text, but what they deſire it ſhould be. Such an apoſtrophe would be very awkwardly introduced here. For it is not the deſign of the ſacred writer, in this place, to aſſert the glory of God the Father. The Hebrews, to whom he wrote, had no doubt of that: their minds were filled with ideas of his dominion and grandeur. Nor does he compare the Father with the Son; but the Son with the angels. The Hebrews entertained the higheſt opinion of that Revelation with which Moſes and the prophets were honoured. The infallible author takes occaſion, therefore, to prefer the New Revelation to the Old; repreſenting the *latter* as communicated by the prophets, who were only *ſervants* in the houſe of God; but the *former* as made by the Son, who is Lord of the houſe. See Heb. i. 1—3.

But becauſe it might be objected, That the law was given by the miniſtration of angels; he takes occaſion to ſhew the vaſt ſuperiority of Jeſus Chriſt, in compariſon with thoſe noble intelligences. He allows, indeed, that they bear the honourable character, "Miniſters of God." As it is written, "He maketh his "angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire." But then he ſignifies, that the Son partakes of his Father's authority and Godhead. He participates of his *authority*. This he proves by thoſe words of the pſalmiſt: "Thy "throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a ſceptre of "righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom. Thou "haſt loved righteouſneſs and hated iniquity: therefore "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil "of gladneſs above thy fellows." Here we behold our

Lord, as Mediator, receiving the kingdom from his Father. But because he partakes with him in the glories of the Godhead, or in the essential perfections of the Supreme Being; he afterwards applies to Jesus such oracles as equal him with the Father, and manifestly prove him to be the Eternal God. For he adds, without the least intimation that he is speaking of a different person; "And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid "the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are "the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but "thou remainest—Thou art the same, and thy years "shall not fail." Which distinction, between the authority he received, and his essential dominion, is contained in a preceding verse: "Whom he hath "appointed heir of all things—By whom also he made "the worlds."—The *former* clause is expressive of that œconomical kingdom, in respect of which it is said; "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." This kingdom he received from the Father. The *latter* clause indicates his essential glory, his eternal power and Godhead; in regard to which this oracle is applied to him: "Thou, LORD, in the beginning, hast laid the "foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the "works of thine hands." This is that participation of the Godhead, in reference to which Jesus says; "I am "in the Father, and the Father in me."—Hence it appears, that the supposed apostrophe, if admitted, would be of little service to the cause we oppose. For though it might serve to elude the force of these words, "Thou, "Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of "the earth"—yet our adversaries could not defend themselves by it against the evidence of these "By "whom also he made the worlds;" it being evident, that he who made the worlds, may well be considered as having laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the heavens.

Again: These words, "Thou remainest—Thou art "the same—Thy years shall not fail;" are, even in

the judgment of our opponents; to be underſtood of Jeſus Chriſt. Nor could they, with the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon, deny it: becauſe the terms are ſynonymous with thoſe which precede, and are inconteſtably applied to him. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."—The following expreſſions, "As a veſture ſhalt thou "fold them up, and they ſhall be changed,"—they alſo underſtand, as relating to Jeſus Chriſt; as expreſſive of the renovation of all things by the Son of God, at the laſt day. But then they violently ſeparate theſe words from thoſe which immediately go before, and with which they are cloſely connected. They would perſuade us, contrary to all the rules of language; contrary to the natural ſignification of the words, and ſcope of the diſcourſe; and contrary to common ſenſe; that there are *two* perſons ſpoken of—That He, of whom it is ſaid, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, haſt laid the foundation "of the earth;" is not the ſame with Him, of whom it is ſaid immediately after, "Thou remaineſt—Thou "ſhalt fold them up." They ſometimes declare, that they will hearken to nothing but their own *reaſon*, when they diſpute with us; but here we need nothing but our own *eyes*, to diſpute with them.

The next oracle we ſhall conſider, is that of Iſaiah; which is applied to Jeſus Chriſt, by the evangeliſt John. "But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, "yet they believed not on him—Eſaias ſaid again, He "hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that "they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand "with their heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal "them. Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his "glory, and ſpake of him."—This paſſage preſents us with an irrefragable argument for the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That the evangeliſt applies to Jeſus that ſplendid appearance of Divine glory, mentioned by Iſaiah; and that it is the glory of JEHOVAH, the God of Iſrael, which he deſcribes; cannot, one would think, admit of a doubt. Or, if any doubt ſhould ariſe

concerning the latter, we need only to peruse the history of that remarkable vision, as it stands in the prophet, in order to be fully satisfied.

That it is the glory of the Supreme Being of which the prophet speaks, appears from the several parts of that description which he gives of it. The majesty of none but the true God can be so great, as to cause the seraphim to vail their faces before it. None but Him, would those princes of heaven thus address, and thus profoundly adore: "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF "HOSTS! THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS "GLORY." Nor could the presence of any but the Most High, cause the prophet thus to exclaim; "Woe is me! "for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips. "—for mine eyes have seen THE KING, THE LORD "OF HOSTS."—And that the evangelist applies this oracle to Jesus Christ, is equally evident. For it is of Him that he speaks, in the verses preceding; and it is of Him that he continues to speak, in the verses following: which puts it beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is Him also of whom the evangelist speaks, when he says; "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and "spake of him."—From all which arises this argument. Isaiah saw the glory of the Supreme Being. But, at the same time and place, he saw the glory of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Supreme Being.

All this is evident, one would have thought; evident beyond dispute. But what cannot subtilty do, when resolved to eclipse the brightest truths?—It asserts various things, which are all equally unwarrantable. For instance: It endeavours to persuade us, that the pronoun *him*, does not relate to Jesus Christ, but to God the Father. It refers these words of the evangelist, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and "spake of him;" not to what *immediately* precedes; but to another citation from the prophet, at some distance; "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the "arm of the Lord revealed?" And it maintains, that

the prophet, in describing the glory of *God*, described also the glory of *Christ*; because the latter is contained in the former. But these suppositions and assertions are all so wild and unnatural, that a man must be blind not to see through them; and exceedingly fond of error, not to despise them.

As the evangelist, through the whole Chapter, treats of Jesus Christ, not at all of God the Father; what reason has any one to believe, that these words must relate to the Father? "These things said Esaias, when "he saw his glory, and spake of him." Who does not perceive, and what but a predilection for an unscriptural hypothesis can prevent a man from acknowledging, that the last clause of the sentence is to be understood of the very same person that is intended in the immediately following words? "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers "also, many believed on him." If Jesus be meant in the *latter*, why not in the *former* verse?—The prophet spake of the true God, on every occasion. This the evangelist knew; of this he could not be ignorant. These things said Esaias, 'when he spake of God'—*When he spake of God!* Why, then, he must say them all his life; say them continually; say them in every page of his prophecies; because, through the whole course of his ministry, he spake of God; proclaiming his glories, revealing his will, and asserting his dominion.—'But this, they say, is a parenthesis.' How does that appear? Have they nothing to do, but to suppose, or assert, without proving? Yet if it were, the pronoun *him*, would still refer to Jesus Christ; because, both in the foregoing and following verses, the evangelist speaks of Christ, and of him only.

Nor is there the least shadow of reason for any to consider these words, "These things said Esaias, when "he saw his glory, and spake of him;" as connected with those, "Lord, who hath believed our report, and "to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?". For with what propriety could it be said, that Isaiah saw *the*

glory of the Lord, in a Chapter where he beheld and ſpeaks of hardly any thing, but the poverty and diſgrace, the ſorrows and ſufferings, of the Lord Meſſiah? in a Chapter which contains very little beſides one continued deſcription of his humiliation? The humiliation of Chriſt is there deſcribed by, The meanneſs of his extraction: "He ſhall grow up, as a root out of a dry ground"—The diſgrace which attends him; "We hid as it were "our faces from him"—The afflictions he endures; "He hath borne our griefs and carried our ſorrows"—His meekneſs and patience; "He is brought as a lamb "to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep dumb before her "ſhearers, ſo he opened not his mouth"—His death; "When he ſhall make his ſoul an offering for ſin"—And the circumſtances attending his burial; "He made "his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his "death."—It is, indeed, ſaid, "The pleaſure of the "Lord ſhall proſper in his hand—He ſhall prolong his "days—He ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong;"—but theſe promiſes lie ſo concealed among the many affecting images of his humiliation and complicated ſufferings, that it is to the laſt degree unreaſonable, to call this a viſion of *his glory*.

Had the evangeliſt thus expreſſed himſelf, 'Theſe 'things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſpake of him;' it might have been ſuppoſed, with ſome little appearance of probability, that the phraſe, *theſe things*, referred to the firſt paſſage cited by him; "Lord, who hath believed "our report?" Yet even then it would have been much more natural to connect it with the immediately preceding citation. But he expreſſes himſelf otherwiſe; "Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, WHEN HE SAW HIS GLORY, "and ſpake of him." Now the prophet beheld his glory, in the *ſixth* Chapter, not in the *fifty-third*; for in the latter, he ſaw very little beſides his humiliation.

Equally unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe, 'That Iſaiah, 'in beholding the glory of God, ſaw the glory of Jeſus 'Chriſt; becauſe the latter is contained in the former.'

For if we may have recourse to such evasions, we may deny or maintain any thing, just as we please. Had that been the meaning, the inspired writer might have applied the oracle to himself and his brethren, as well as to Jesus Christ: because the glory of their character and office, as the children of God and the apostles of the Lamb, was contained in the glory of Jehovah and derived from it. According to this interpretation he might have expressed himself thus; 'These things said Esaias, 'when he saw *our* glory, and spake of *us*.'—Say not, 'This would have been a profanation.' For if that infinite disparity which is between the glory of Christ, and the glory of Jehovah, do not prevent what was spoken only concerning the glory of the *latter* from being applied to that of the *former*; then the difference between the glory of Christ, and the glory of the apostles, being finite, cannot hinder an oracle which describes the glory of Christ, from being with much greater propriety applied to them.—Again: The glory of Christ, if he be a mere creature, cannot be the same with God's; nor can the peculiar glory of God, such as Isaiah describes, be the same with Jesus Christ's. You might, therefore, with much more truth and propriety say, He that sees the king's glory, beholds the glory of his meanest subject; than to affirm, with our adversaries, That Isaiah, by seeing God's glory, saw the glory of Jesus Christ. Because, in the *former* case, the extent of the disparity is easily conceived; but in the *latter* it is inconceivable and unbounded.

Another passage full to my purpose, is the following. "When he bringeth in the First-begotten into the "world he saith, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD "WORSHIP HIM."—It is agreed, on both sides, that the sacred writer applies to Jesus Christ those words of the psalmist, "Worship him all ye gods," or, "all ye "*angels*;" as the inspired author teaches us to understand the original word, in this place.

That the pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the true God, when he ſays, "Worſhip him all ye gods, or angels," appears by only reading the pſalm. Thus it begins, "The "LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude "of iſles be glad thereof." But why ſhould the earth and the iſles exult in the glory of this dominion, if their Creator be not the ſovereign intended? Beſides, the great name JEHOVAH, ſo often applied to Him whoſe kingdom and ſovereign dominion the ſacred penman deſcribes, and accompanied with ſo many characters of the glory of the Moſt High, could not be given to any other without manifeſt impiety.—"Clouds and darkneſs "are round about him: righteouſneſs and judgment are "the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before "him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His "lightenings enlightened the world: the earth ſaw and "trembled." Theſe, it muſt be allowed, are the characteriſtics of His preſence, who created the heavens and the earth. Theſe are deſcriptions of His awful glories, who, whenever he pleaſes, can ſhake the pillars of nature; can employ thunder and fire, and all the dreadful artillery of heaven, to deſtroy rebellious worms, and to render his Divine majeſty and ſovereign dominion more conſpicuous—"The hills melted like wax, at the "preſence of the Lord; at the preſence of the Lord "of the whole earth." Nothing is more evident than that, "The Lord of the whole earth," is a title peculiar to the Eternal Sovereign. "Behold, the ark of the "covenant of *the Lord of all the earth*, ſhall go before you "over Jordan," ſays the magnanimous Joſhua. "Theſe "are the four ſpirits of the heavens, which go forth "from ſtanding before *the Lord of all the earth*—And "I will conſecrate their gain to JEHOVAH, and their "ſubſtance to *the Lord of the whole earth*," ſay the prophetic ſeers.—The manner alſo in which the title is given him, in the text before us, is no leſs remarkable than the title itſelf. For the Pſalmiſt, deſigning to raiſe our attention, to excite our adminiſtration, and to fill

as with reverence of that Sublime Being of whom he ſpeaks, redoubles his expreſſions; and, with a ſingular emphaſis, ſays; "The hills melted like wax, AT THE "PRESENCE OF THE LORD; AT THE PRESENCE OF "THE LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH." And then he adds, "The heavens declare his righteouſneſs, and all "the people ſee his glory." But whoſe *righteouſneſs* is revealed by the heavens, whoſe *glory* is beheld by the people, except thoſe of their great Creator and Preſerver? "—Confounded be all they that ſerve graven images, "that boaſt themſelves of idols." As it is the true God who is oppoſed to idols; and as it is the true God who is glorified, by the confuſion of idolaters; ſo none but He can be intended in this place.—"Thou, Lord, art "high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above "all gods." If theſe words do not expreſs the idea of the true God, language is not capable of doing it; for nothing is more evident, than that He only is to be ſupremely exalted.

If, then, each of theſe characters be adapted to ſhew, that the true, the great, the infinite GOD, is intended in this Pſalm; certainly ſuch a collection of them muſt leave no room for doubt. Nay, ſuch is the evidence, in this reſpect, that if we refuſe to acknowledge the Great Supreme, in this devout and very ſublime ode; we ſhall not be able, with certainty, to find his character, nor to behold his glory, in any oracle, or in any part, of the Old Teſtament. For that immenſely glorious Being, whoſe perfections are here celebrated, is deſcribed by the ſame characters which are given to the true God throughout the ancient Scriptures; and eſpecially by his great and terrible name, JEHOVAH: a name, which he appropriated to himſelf, on a very important occaſion—which he ſignalized by a thouſand miracles—which is here connected with the idea of univerſal dominion, and with the diſplays of his glory in heaven and earth. So that if it were any other than the true God, who is deſcribed by characters ſo eſſential and peculiar to

Him; no expreſſions could be uſed, about an affair of the moſt ſolemn importance, more ambiguous, or more deceitful.

Is it not then ſurpriſing, that Socinus ſhould apply all theſe characters to Jeſus Chriſt; to one whom he conſiders, as a mere man? 'Since it is evident, ſays 'he, from the confeſſion of all the world, that in this 'Pſalm there is a prophecy concerning the kingdom of 'Jeſus Chriſt; why might not Chriſt (a man to whom 'all power in heaven and earth was given, and being 'conſidered as entering on the poſſeſſion of his kingdom, 'prophetically foretold and deſcribed) be with propriety 'called, *The Lord of the whole earth?*' Why, becauſe he who bears that divine title is deſcribed by ſo many other characters, which are peculiar to the true God. Becauſe He who is the ſubject of this Pſalm, is alſo the ſubject of that which immediately precedes, whoſe glory is thus deſcribed. "All the gods of the nations are idols; "but the LORD made the heavens. Honour and "majeſty are before him; ſtrength and beauty are in "his ſanctuary. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds "of the people, give unto the LORD glory and ſtrength. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: "bring an offering and come into his courts. O worſhip "the LORD in the beauty of holineſs; fear before him "all the earth. Say among the Heathen, that the "Lord reigneth—Let the heavens rejoice, and let the "earth be glad; let the ſea roar and the fulneſs thereof. "Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then "ſhall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD; "for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth."—That theſe two Pſalms are parallel, is very evident. For they both ſpeak of God's glory, of his coming, and of his kingdom. They both exalt the true God above the divinities of the Heathen. They both require mankind to worſhip the Lord, the eternal JEHOVAH, as having ſupreme dominion over all creatures. And they both

invite inanimate creatures to rejoice at the preſence, and in the government of God.

It is, then, of the true God theſe words were ſpoken, "Worſhip Him all ye gods;" or, "Let all the angels "of God worſhip Him." But it was concerning JESUS CHRIST that the high command was given. Of this an infallible author aſſures us. Of this, therefore, we ought by no means to doubt: nor do our opponents themſelves deny it. Let them draw the inference, then, and acknowledge with us, That Jeſus Chriſt is the true God, and is deſcribed in the ancient oracles as the Supreme Being. For hence we learn, that they who are called gods; or, to adopt their own language, they who are gods *by office*, are here expreſsly commanded to worſhip Jeſus Chriſt, as God *by nature*.

Socinus in vain endeavours to ſolve the difficulty, with which he is here preſſed, by ſaying; 'They who 'worſhip Chriſt, worſhip the Supreme God; becauſe 'Jeſus repreſents him in a ſingular manner, and in a very 'eminent ſenſe.' For the queſtion is not, Whether, in adoring Jeſus Chriſt, we adore the true God; but, Whether theſe words, "Let all the angels of "God worſhip him," were not ſpoken of Jeſus Chriſt.

Should any one maintain, that he who loves his brother, loves God, becauſe he loves him only as bearing the image of his Maker; he would ſay nothing but what is warrantable. But were he to infer from thence, that when the Divine Lawgiver ſays, "Thou ſhalt love "the Lord thy God with all thy heart," he ſpeaks of our neighbour, and not of God only; his concluſion would be very extravagant. So, were we to grant, that he who worſhips Chriſt, worſhips, in ſome meaſure, the true God; yet we ſhould not be obliged to allow, that he who requires us to adore God, requires us by the ſame command to adore Jeſus Chriſt; there being no conſequence from the one to the other.—Beſides, if in adoring Chriſt, we worſhip the true God; then the

paſſage under conſideration might have been applied to all the kings of the earth. For they, in ſome reſpects, bear the image of God; and we honour them as God's vicegerents here below. But are we from hence authorized to ſay, That he who honours kings, honours God himſelf? If we be, we may apply to them the oracle in the ninety-ſeventh Pſalm, as it is applied to Jeſus Chriſt. For if it belong to Chriſt, though it be meant only of the Supreme Being, becauſe in worſhipping the former, we adore the latter; nothing hinders us from ſaying, that it belongs alſo to kings; becauſe in honouring them, we honour the Eternal Sovereign, whoſe image they bear.

But the queſtion is not, What ſubtilty can invent, in order to elude the force of this argument; but, What is the natural import of the words, as applied in the epiſtle to the Hebrews? and, Whether any can be excuſed from taking them in the ſenſe adopted by us? ſeeing, on the one hand, they were ſpoken of the true God; and, on the other, that the Infallible Spirit applies them to Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAPTER III.

The apoſtles did not apply the ancient oracles to JESUS CHRIST, by mere Alluſion, or Accomodation.

CLEARLY to diſcern the importance of the argument, which is drawn from that application of the ancient oracles which the apoſtles have made to Jeſus Chriſt; we need only to inquire, Whether the Holy Ghoſt, when ſpeaking by the prophets in the paſſages juſt conſidered, deſigned to characterize Jeſus Chriſt. For, if that was his deſign, he certainly intended that we ſhould conſider him, as THE LORD; OUR GOD; THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; JEHOVAH; JEHOVAH OF HOSTS; and THE MOST HIGH. But if he did not intend to repreſent the Redeemer by theſe characters; if they were deſigned for the true God, in diſtinction from Jeſus Chriſt; then we muſt look upon their application to Jeſus, by the apoſtles, only as an *accommodation* of the ancient Scriptures to preſent events, founded on ſome ſort of reſemblance between the one and the other. But though ſuch accommodation be not without example, in Divine and human language; it has no place here, as may appear from the following conſiderations.

Some of theſe paſſages inconteſtibly belong to Jeſus Chriſt, by the intention of that Spirit who inſpired the prophets; as has been already proved. Theſe, therefore, demonſtrate, that Jeſus is inveſted with the peculiar characters of God's glory, by the intention of the Holy Ghoſt.—Nor will the deſign of the apoſtles, in citing and applying the ancient oracles to Jeſus Chriſt, permit us to conſider that application as merely by way of alluſion, or accommodation. For their deſign is, either to prove his Divine miſſion, or to condemn the

unbelief of the Jews, and to remove the ſcandal of it by ſhewing that it was foretold; or to declare his infinite excellence, and ſuperiority over all creatures; or to perſuade mankind to render him thoſe honours which are his eternal right, by ſhewing that the Holy Spirit requires they ſhould be addreſſed to him.

The apoſtles adduce theſe oracles to prove the *Divine miſſion* of Jeſus Chriſt. On this account Peter, in his diſcourſe to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, cites a prophecy from Joel. "And it ſhall "come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour "out my Spirit upon all fleſh." This prediction he afterwards applies to Jeſus Chriſt in the following words. "This Jeſus hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are "witneſſes. Therefore being by the right hand of God "exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe "of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye "now ſee and hear."—Hence I infer, that the apoſtles, deſigning to prove the Divine miſſion of their Maſter from the ancient prophecies, muſt have loſt their reaſon if they did not ſee, that they defeated their own intention, by applying to Chriſt ſuch oracles as expreſs the peculiar glory of the Deity, if they had not conſidered Him as a truly Divine Perſon: becauſe they could not be ignorant, that the great ſtumbling-block of the Jews was, "That Jeſus had made himſelf equal with God." Conſequently, a ſmall degree of prudence would have been ſufficient to ſhew the apoſtles, that every application of ancient prophecy to Jeſus Chriſt, which was in the leaſt adapted to convey an idea of that kind, would be ſo far from convincing the Jews that he was the Meſſiah, that it would ſtrengthen their prejudices and harden their hearts againſt him; and be conſidered by them as an additional evidence, that he was an uſurper of the glory of God, and ſuffered death on the croſs as the juſt reward of his blaſphemy. Can it be ſuppoſed, then, that the apoſtles, who longed for the ſalvation of their brethren, would lay an invincible bar before them,

by making arbitrary allusions and forced accommodations?

Another end intended by the apostles, in applying the prophecies to Jesus Christ, was, To *condemn the unbelief* of the Jews, and to *remove the scandal* of it; by shewing, that their infidelity and hardness of heart were foretold by the prophets. For this purpose the evangelist thus introduces the following passage from Isaiah. "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias "said again: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened "their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, "nor understand with their heart, and be converted "and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, "when he saw his glory, and spake of him."—The reader will remember, that the prophet saw the glory of the true God, as proved already. Now a design to shew, that the unbelief of those who rejected the Messiah had been foretold, required the apostles to produce such oracles as *really* and *properly* respected the time and person of their Messiah; such as were originally intended to be applied to him, and had been so applied by common tradition. So far were they from being obliged to make allusive applications that were unnatural, or accommodations that were impious, of the peculiar characters of Jehovah; that so to have done, would have justified the conduct of the Jews, and rendered their unbelief lawful.

A further design of the apostles, in making such applications to their Divine Master, was, To declare his *infinite excellence*; to assert his *superiority* and *dominion* over all creatures, without exception. This appears from the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. But arbitrary allusions and accommodations, are by no means suitable to this design. For with what propriety, truth, or honesty, could the author of the epistle just mentioned, attempt to prove, That the Old Testament speaks greater and nobler things of Jesus Christ, than it does of angels; by passages in which the Spirit of inspiration had the *former* no more in his eye, than the

had the *latter?* If it were a bare accommodation, we need only a turn of thought a little different from his, applying to an angel what he applies to Chriſt; and we ſhall, with equal reaſon, draw concluſions directly oppoſite.

Once more: The apoſtles deſigned, by theſe applications, To perſuade mankind to *render thoſe honours* to their Lord, which are his eternal right; by ſhewing that the Holy Ghoſt requires they ſhould be addreſſed to him. In purſuance of this intention, they cite ſuch paſſages as command adoration to be given to him; and ſuch as declare the purpoſe of God that it ſhall be paid. Of which number are the two following. "Let all the "angels of God worſhip him—At the name of Jeſus "every knee ſhall bow." But, as mere alluſions and accommodations have their foundation in thoſe reſemblances, which our imagination finds between ancient prophecies and preſent objects; it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtles ground the worſhip of Chriſt upon them. Were this the caſe, they would act juſt like a man who ſhould endeavour to prove, That a private ſoldier deſerves the titles of majeſty, and ought to be honoured as a prince and conqueror; becauſe he had met with ſome actions, or expreſſions, in the hiſtory of Alexander the Great, which might, by way of alluſion or accommodation, be applied to him.

Beſides, ſuch accommodations would be impious and blaſphemous, if Jeſus Chriſt were not of the ſame eſſence with his Father. For if, out of regard to Chriſt, you would not dare to accommodate to any man living theſe words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away "the ſin of the world;" a reverence for the Supreme Being ought ſtill more forcibly to reſtrain us, from applying to Jeſus, a mere creature, the peculiar characters of the Great Creator. Becauſe the diſproportion, in the *latter* caſe, is infinitely greater than that in the *former:* and becauſe the character contained in the words of the Baptiſt, is not ſo peculiar to Jeſus, as thoſe

titles are to the Great Supreme, which are found in the ancient prophets. For, according to our opponents, Christ is in such a manner THE LAMB OF GOD, that another *might* have been so as well as he, if the eternal sovereign had so ordained: but the Supreme Being is in such a manner JEHOVAH; THE MIGHTY GOD; THE KING OF GLORY; THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; and THE LORD OF HOSTS; that none but He *can possibly* have the glory. If, then, we could not, without blasphemy, apply to any other man, whether by way of allusion, or of accommodation, this *one* character, THE LAMB OF GOD, which, though peculiar to Christ, has no relation to his essence; how much more impious would it be, to apply to Jesus *so many* grand titles of the Most High, which are not only peculiar to him, but expressive of his essence? In the *former* case, the honour of a creature, highly beloved of God, is prejudiced; in the *latter*, the glory of God himself is injured. In *that*, the only danger is, lest scandal be given by a profane allusion; in *this*, there would be both scandal and seduction; such seduction as would terminate in idolatry and ruin, by confounding the creature with the Creator.

Our oppofers, then, may put their imagination upon the stretch and rack their wits; they may labour to render some books of the Holy Scripture suspected, and speculate on the manner how the apostles were inspired, as long and as much as they please; but it will all be to no purpose, while it remains a fact, That the apostles have applied to Christ, whether by way of allusion, or of accommodation, or otherwise, those oracles of the prophets which characterize the true God. For if Jesus Christ be not a partaker of the Divine essence; if he be a mere creature, to whom such characters cannot possibly belong; we must consider the apostles as betraying us into idolatry, by impious witticisms, and blasphemous applications of the prophetic Writings.—It necessarily follows, therefore, if the hypothesis of our adversaries

be true, That the prophets did not foreſee things as they were to come to paſs; and that the apoſtles, either did not underſtand the prophets, or they deſigned to betray us into error; conſequently, that there is no harmony between the Old Teſtament and the New.

SECTION V.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true GOD, neither the ancient Jewiſh, nor the Chriſtian Religion, is attended with ſufficient Criteria to diſtinguiſh it from Impoſture.

CHAPTER I.

The propoſition proved, in reſpect of the Jewiſh Religion.

IN order to prove the propoſition, it will be proper to conſider, How God was pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf under the Old, and alſo under the New Teſtament.—At the commencement of the Moſaic œconomy, Jehovah manifeſted himſelf to the ſon of Amram, upon mount Horeb, in a burning-buſh: but it is very obſervable, that he who appeared to Moſes is called, *The angel of the Lord.* "And the ANGEL OF THE "LORD, ſays the ſacred hiſtorian, appeared unto him "in a flame of fire, out of the midſt of a buſh—And "Moſes ſaid, I will now turn aſide and ſee this great "ſight—And when JEHOVAH ſaw that he turned aſide "to ſee, GOD called unto him out of the midſt of the "buſh and ſaid, Moſes, Moſes. And he ſaid, Here "am I—And he ſaid—I am THE GOD of thy father, "THE GOD of Abraham, THE GOD of Iſaac, and "THE GOD of Jacob." But I forbear to tranſcribe the whole account of this wonderful viſion; the reader may peruſe it at his leiſure.

It may, however, be remarked, that when Moſes diſcovered a reluctance to obey the Lord, by going to Pharaoh, becauſe he had an impediment in his ſpeech; he was rebuked by him in the following manner: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the "dumb, or deaf, or the ſeeing, or the blind? have "not I THE LORD?" And, Moſes inquiring what he ſhould ſay to the children of Iſrael, when they ſhould aſk who it was that ſent him; God gave himſelf a new name; for he ſaid, "I AM THAT I AM. Thus ſhalt "thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, I AM hath ſent "me unto you." At the ſame time, to obviate any ſuſpicion which might ariſe in their minds, that Moſes ſpake of an unknown God, the Divine Speaker adds; "Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, THE "LORD GOD of your fathers, THE GOD of Abraham, "THE GOD of Iſaac, and THE GOD of Jacob, hath "ſent me unto you. THIS IS MY NAME FOR EVER, "AND THIS IS MY MEMORIAL UNTO ALL GENERA-"TIONS." And, afterwards, with great ſolemnity adds; "I will ſtretch out my hand, and ſmite Egypt with all "my wonders, which I will do in the midſt thereof; "and after that he will let you go. And I will give "this people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians, and "it ſhall come to paſs that when ye go, ye ſhall not "go empty." And again, "When thou goeſt to return "into Egypt, ſee that thou do all thoſe wonders before "Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I "will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people "go."—He, therefore, who ſpake to Moſes in the buſh, muſt be the ſame divinely glorious Perſon, who ſpake to the people of Iſrael from the top of mount Sinai, in the following language: "I am the Lord thy "God, which have brought thee out of the land of "Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage." Conſequently, the very ſame who gave the law to Iſrael, with ſuch ſolemnity, majeſty, and glory.

He, then, who manifeſts himſelf to Moſes, is, according to our hypotheſis; The Angel of the Lord; the Meſſenger of the covenant; the Eternal Wiſdom; the Son of God; JEHOVAH; GOD BLESSED FOR EVER; but ſo ſoon as you quit this hypotheſis, you run into the moſt glaring and impious abſurdities.—That He who reveals himſelf to Moſes, is the *Angel of the Lord*, we ought not to queſtion, we cannot doubt; becauſe it is expreſsly declared in the ſacred text. Nor can any figure be here ſuppoſed. For, admitting that an angel of God might, by a figure, be called GOD; yet we are certain that God the Father cannot, by any figure, be called the *angel* of the Lord.

Here, conſequently, according to our oppoſers, we find a creature inveſting himſelf with the names and the attributes, the works and the glory, of the infinite Creator; ſo appropriating them to himſelf, that it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh him from the true God. For he who appeared to Moſes, repeatedly calls himſelf GOD, and JEHOVAH. He, once and again, denominates himſelf, THE GOD *of Abraham*, THE GOD *of Iſaac*, and THE GOD *of Jacob*: and, in ſo doing, aſſumes the ſeveral names which the Hebrews commonly gave to their God; whether to diſtinguiſh him from all his creatures, or to contraſt him with the gods of the Heathen, or to expreſs his infinite perfections.—Beſides, this Angel appropriates theſe adorable names to himſelf on ſuch an occaſion, as rendered it of the laſt importance to Moſes and the choſen tribes that he ſhould not aſſume them. For he takes them at a time when he cannot poſſibly do it, without *impoſing* on him to whom he ſpeaks; ſo impoſing on him, as to betray him, and the Iſraelites in general, into idolatry; and this alſo when Moſes was careful not to be deceived; when he drew near to ſee who it was that appeared to him; and at a time when it was of the utmoſt conſequence for him to know, by whoſe authority he was to ſpeak to the people of Iſrael, and who it was that ſent him.

Again: He who reveals himself to Moſes, not contented with thoſe names which the God of Abraham had uſually taken, and by which he made himſelf known to the patriarchs, gives himſelf a *new* name. Now, admitting that a creature might, on ſome occaſions, lawfully aſſume one, or more, of the names of God; yet, certainly, no creature can give himſelf a *new* name of God, with whatever powers he may be inveſted, or to whomſoever he may ſpeak. For God ſays, "I am "JEHOVAH; that is my name—They ſhall know that "my name is JEHOVAH." Theſe declarations moſt emphatically ſhew, that the great Name is not common to the creature with the Creator. They inform us, if any expreſſions can do ſo, that it is peculiar to the Supreme Being, and conſecrated to his adorable eſſence; that it ſo belongs to the Moſt High, that it cannot be aſſumed by any other. How comes it, then, that we hear an angel ſay; "I AM THAT I AM—Say to the "children of Iſrael, I AM hath ſent me unto you?" How came he to utter theſe words; "THE LORD GOD "—THE GOD of Abraham, THE GOD of Iſaac, THE "GOD of Jacob—this is MY NAME for ever; and this "is MY MEMORIAL to all generations?"

Further: This angel does not only take the *names* of God, but he alſo attributes to himſelf the works and the glory of God. The *works* of God. This he does, in a very emphatical manner, in thoſe chiding interrogatories addreſſed to the procraſtinating Moſes. "Who "made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or "deaf, or the ſeeing, or the blind? Have not I THE "LORD?" Theſe expreſſions evidently ſhew, that the angel conſiders and reveals himſelf, as the Creator of all things.—The *glory* of God. This he does when he calls himſelf, "The God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and "of Jacob." For Abraham's God was acknowledged, by that illuſtrious prieſt Melchiſedeck, as the "Poſſeſſor "of heaven and earth;" by Iſaac, as the object of his worſhip, for he is called "his Fear;" and by Jacob

he is adored, as "God Almighty." Beſides, he ſays to Moſes, "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy ſhoes "from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou ſtandeſt "is holy ground." In which words he ſtrongly demands that devotional reverence which is due to none but God. And this angel, after he had brought the Iſraelites out of Egypt (for we have ſhewn that He who ſpake to Moſes in the buſh, was the deliverer and lawgiver of the choſen tribes) ſpeaks from the ſummit of Horeb and ſays; "Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me."

Now, on the hypotheſis of our opponents, it ſhould ſeem that this was done, to render the Iſraelites guilty of impiety and idolatry. Of *impiety*: for if the true God be more glorious and worthy of adoration than this angel, with what propriety could he ſay, "Thou ſhalt "have no other gods before me?"—Of *idolatry*: for with whatever characters this angel might be inveſted, if he was not the Moſt High, he could not lawfully require ſuch honours as are peculiar to God.—In a word, when the law commands us to worſhip God, and him only, it either ſpeaks of a *ſupreme* or a *ſubordinate* worſhip. If the *latter*, then, as before obſerved, there is no ſuch thing as ſupreme worſhip mentioned in the decalogue. If the *former*, as our adverſaries themſelves acknowledge, then it follows, that this Angel, though inferior to Jehovah, required of the Iſraelites that ſupreme worſhip, which is due to none but the true God; and, conſequently, betrayed them into idolatry.

This idolatry is of a remarkable kind, and has various peculiarities attending it which are very ſurpriſing. For it is *not criminal*, on the part of the Iſraelites. They cannot be juſtly blamed for concluding, that he who calls himſelf "the God of their fathers," is the true God; and that he who aſſumes the great name, JEHOVAH, and claims the honour of "making the dumb and "the deaf, the ſeeing and the blind," is the Creator of all things. Nor are they culpable for paying to him

who reveals himself to them as the Creator and the Mighty God, supreme worship.—Again: This idolatry is, if I may be allowed so to speak, of *divine institution*. Idolatry usually springs from our corruptions; but this has its original in Divine Revelation, if that which Moses received deserve the name. For God himself sent the Angel who assumed the peculiar characters of Jehovah's glory; or, at least, the Angel pretends to be God, the God of the Hebrews. For when he says to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, "and the God of Jacob;" he either designs to pass for the God of those patriarchs, or he does not. If *not*, his discourse is impertinent from the beginning to the end. If he *does*, it is he himself who betrays the children of Israel into idolatry.—Once more: This idolatry was *unavoidable*. For the ancient Hebrews could not avoid it without maintaining, either that the true God, the God of their fathers, when condescending to reveal himself to man, was not worthy of that adoration which he requires; or, that He who manifested himself to Moses in the bush, and to the people on Sinai, was not the true God, the God of the patriarchs.

'But this Angel speaks in the person of Him whom 'he represents; and it is as an ambassador of the Most 'High, that he bears the names of God.' Then he should have told Moses so, when he anxiously inquired of him, *who* he was; and desired to be informed, by *what name* he should make him known to his brethren in Egypt. Had that been the case, it was easy, it was natural, it was absolutely necessary for him to have said, 'I am the *ambassador*, or the *messenger*, of Abraham's 'God.' But, instead of that, he says, "I am THE "GOD of Abraham."—Various reasons concur to assure us, that he did not consider himself, that he did not reveal himself, as an ambassador. For instance: An ambassador does not give *new names* to his master, when speaking in his person, and standing in his place. An ambassador, who represents his sovereign, cannot say,

'Ye shall have no other king but me;' without forfeiting his allegiance, and deserving to be treated as an enemy to his prince. An ambassador does not attribute to himself the *personal qualifications* of his master; such as, his wisdom and power, as this Angel attributes to himself the perfections of God. Nor can any ambassador assume to himself the *names* and *titles*, the *works* and *honours*, of the sovereign whom he represents; without provoking the jealousy of his master, and being guilty of high-treason. For, an ambassador is called to advance the honour of his master; not to assume his prerogatives and rob him of his glory, as this Angel does, if he be only an ambassador.

Our opposers may search for examples as much as they please, to countenance such a conduct; yet I will venture to say, they can find only one, which is that of the *stage:* on which we behold a private person, assuming all the names and titles of the king he represents; attributing to himself his works, and requiring his honours. But here it is all fictitious; there is nothing serious in it: or, if the actor were serious, he would be in danger, either of being despised for his weakness, or of being punished for high-treason. Inexpressibly shocking would it be, to consider the Mosaic religion in the light of a comedy; in which an angel, a mere creature, acts the part of the Supreme Being. For that would represent, *man*, as deceived and ruined; GOD, as dishonoured and blasphemed; and both by Divine connivance, both by Divine agency.

Yet, horrid as the thought is, it is countenanced by the hypotheses of our antagonists. For, according to their view of this passage, an angel of darkness, intending to draw mankind from the worship of the true God, and being permitted by Jehovah to practise his wiles and his malice; would have taken the same method, as this angel did, in order to succeed in his malignant designs. What else could he do so likely to answer his end, as to ascribe to himself the names, titles, and works of the

Deity; by saying to the Israelites, "I am THE GOD "of your fathers;—THE GOD of Abraham, THE GOD "of Isaac, and THE GOD of Jacob?"—We cannot believe that he who speaks to Moses is a mere creature, without supposing, that a mere creature designs to pass for the God of the Hebrews. For how is it possible to conceive that an angel, who does not design to be considered as the God of Israel, should say to Moses, with a view to inform him who he is; "I AM THE "GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob?" But if he be a mere creature, and yet designs to put himself in the place of God; he is guilty of impiety, and chargeable with a design of leading mankind into idolatry. Thus we must conceive of his conduct. And though we should afterwards find that he performs very wonderful works, yet they may be justly suspected; because the law directs us to judge of miracles by the doctrine, not of doctrine by the miracles *. Thus the Jewish religion loses its Divine characters; and, instead of being an appointment of God and the practice of it communion with him, we conceive a black suspicion, that it is a trick of the spirit of darkness, and an idolatrous commerce.

The supposition is horrid; but, without abandoning the Socinian and Arian hypotheses, we cannot easily lose sight of it. For what criteria will you find in the Mosaic system, to convince you of its divinity; if you once consider it as having its rise in deception and falsehood? Do you mention its *holiness?* but that, more than any thing, is called into question. For what holiness can there be in a religion which originated in imposture, and is maintained by idolatry? If you say, *God* spake to Moses; it is answered, Not God, but an angel, who put himself in the place of God. If you allege *the miracles* that were performed by Moses; I reply, Many and wonderful works were also wrought by Pharaoh's

* Deut. xiii. 1—5.

magicians: so that little more can be inferred from thence, than that the spirit, of whose agency Moses was the instrument, was more powerful than he who favoured the magicians. For facts, however great and wonderful, ought not to be ascribed to the immediate agency and miraculous interposition of God, if inconsistent with holiness; which is manifestly the case, in the Mosaic religion, on the hypotheses condemned.

That the Angel, who reveals himself to Moses, acts inconsistently with the glory of God, supposing that Angel to be a mere creature; will further appear, if the following things be considered. It is evident from the Scripture, that God's design was, to exalt Jesus Christ above all the angels. For of him it is written, "He hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent "name than they—To which of the angels said he at "any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine "enemies thy foot-stool?—Let all the angels of God "worship him."—This is the doctrine of the sacred author.—But Christ, according to the Socinians, is exalted above the angels, not on account of his *nature*; for the human is far inferior to the angelic nature; but in virtue of the *offices*, *trusts*, and *gifts*, which he received. For, on their principles, it is only on account of these that he is called God. If, then, he was a mere angel who appeared to Moses, and delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage; it unavoidably follows, that an angel was more exalted and more honoured than Jesus Christ, contrary to God's design.

This appears from hence. Jesus Christ, according to our opponents, is called GOD, by a kind of analogy; but this angel calls himself, "The God of Abraham, "of Isaac, and of Jacob."—Christ is addressed only with subordinate worship; but this angel causes himself to be adored, as the Supreme Being. For he says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."—The former attributes to himself the works of God; so does the latter, in the most explicit manner. "Who hath

"made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or "deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I JEHOVAH? "I will ſtreteh out my hand, and ſmite Egypt with all "my wonders—I will bring you up out of the affliction "of Egypt—I am the Lord thy God, which have "brought thee out of the land of Egypt."—Does Jeſus bear very high and honourable characters? ſo does this angel. For he is called GOD, and JEHOVAH, repeatedly; he is alſo denominated, the LORD GOD OF THE HEBREWS; THE FEAR of Iſaac; and the JUDGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH, in whoſe preſence the renowned Abraham was but duſt and aſhes; for it is the ſame Angel of the Lord, concerning whom all theſe things are ſpoken.

Now as theſe characters, in the opinion of our adverſaries, are too high and grand for Jeſus Chriſt; they ought, upon their principles, to conſider this Angel as uſurping the glory of God. But if ſo, he betrays the Iſraelites into impiety, and becomes their idol. Conſequently, the religion which he teaches, the religion which he eſtabliſhes, has not ſufficient criteria to diſtinguiſh it from impoſture.—You meet, I allow, with many wonderful and ſupernatural things in the eſtabliſhment of it; but then you find them produced by one who uſurps the glory of the true God, which is a character of the ſpirit of darkneſs. What a blaſphemous thought! what a deteſtable ſuſpicion! Does the ſpirit of darkneſs concern himſelf in the holineſs and happineſs of men, that he ſhould give them ſo pure and perfect a law? Impoſſible! We may reſt aſſured, therefore, that the principle which leads to ſuch a monſtrous and horrid concluſion, muſt be falſe.

CHAPTER II.

The propoſition proved, in reſpect of the Chriſtian Religion.

WHAT has been ſaid of the Angel who appeared to Moſes, may be aſſerted of Jeſus Chriſt, if the doctrine of our oppoſers be true. To prove and illuſtrate the point, I would offer the following things to the reader's conſideration.

The New Teſtament, it is evident, aſcribes the moſt ſignal works of God to Jeſus Chriſt: ſuch as, the *creation* of all things, which had always characterized the God of Iſrael; the *preſervation* of all things, which belongs to the Creator; and the *redemption* of the world, which the prophets refer to the Supreme Being, and to him only. The ſame infallible rule of our faith attributes to him the *perfections*, and *names*, and *glory* of God. There he is deſcribed, as *equal* with God, as *one* with God, and as GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. When, therefore, it is conſidered, that all theſe things were ſaid and recorded of him, by *his* direction and under *his* inſpiration, we may venture to affirm; That a proud, preſumptuous, rebellious creature, whoſe intention it was to invade the honour, and to put himſelf in the place of God, could not have adopted a more promiſing mode of proceeding, or have better ſucceeded in his deſign. But theſe things deſerve a more particular conſideration.

The New Teſtament aſcribes to Jeſus Chriſt the moſt magnificent and ſignal *works* of God. To begin with the work of *creation*. Could Paul, intending to deſcribe his divine Maſter as the Creator of all things, have uſed more emphatical, or more pertinent expreſſions than theſe? "For by him were all things created that are in "heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible;

" whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principali-
" ties, or powers: all things were created *by* him, and
" *for* him. And He is before all things, and by him all
" things consist." Of Him it is said, " There is—one
" Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. All
" things were made by Him, and without Him was not
" any thing made that was made. He laid the founda-
" tion of the earth, and the heavens are the works of
" his hands."—The *preservation* of the world, or the *conservation* of all things, is also attributed to him. For it is expressly said, " By him all things consist. He
" upholdeth all things by the word of his power."—The *administration of Providence;* and, especially, the *care of believers.* " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the
" end of the world. Where two or three are gathered
" together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
A promise this, which Christ could not perform, as man, but only as God: because, as man, he is limited by time and place; as God, he acts independently on both. To say that he is in the midst of our religious assemblies 'by his Spirit,' is not sufficient. For if the Spirit intended be the Spirit of Christ, Christ must be God; because that Spirit is present, with devout worshippers, in all places at the same time. But that Jesus is really and properly God, our opponents will not allow. The Spirit in question, therefore, must be that of the Father, and not of Christ: consequently, not our Lord, but the Divine Father, is present in our assemblies. Nor is Jesus said to be in the midst of his people 'by faith,' which is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Elisha received a portion of the spirit of Elijah, in receiving from God such gifts as were similar to those of Elijah; yet it is never said that Elijah was with the Jews, or in the midst of their assemblies, after his ascension into heaven. —That greatest of all Divine transactions, that most wonderful of all Divine works, REDEMPTION, is attributed to him in a peculiar manner. Hence he is so often, and in the most emphatical sense, called THE

SAVIOUR and REDEEMER: and hence the church is represented as his property and purchase. "The church "of God, which he purchased with his own blood." Remarkable words! They strongly imply, that Jesus, the Redeemer, is GOD; and that he is declared to be so, by the work of redemption. They lead us also to reflect on that gracious declaration, by an ancient prophet; "Your GOD will come—he will come and "save you."—Our *sanctification* is attributed to him. He enlightens our minds and converts our hearts. He quickens the dead in sin, and in his hands the saints are preserved to eternal life. Yet sanctification is a Divine work: "for it is God that worketh in us, both to will "and to do, of his good pleasure."—The Scriptures attribute the work of *glorification* also to Jesus Christ. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white "raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the "book of life—Him that overcometh, will I make a "pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no "more out—To him that overcometh will I grant to "sit with me in my throne."

The *perfections* of God are ascribed to Jesus Christ.—The *power* of God. He "upholdeth all things by "the word of his power."—The *knowledge* of God. "All the churches shall know that I am He which "searcheth the reins and heart—Lord, thou knowest "all things."—The *eternity* of God. "His name shall "be called—The everlasting Father. Thou art the "same, and thy years shall not fail."—The *immensity* of God. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but "he that came down from heaven; even the Son of "man which is in heaven."—The *truth* and *faithfulness* of God. "I am the truth—Thus saith the Amen."—The *mercy* of God: for He pardoneth sin.—The *authority* of God: for he commanded the gospel to be preached in *his own* name; and sent his disciples to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, "and of the Holy Ghost;" and, as the Judge of all,

He declares, "I will give to every one according to "his works." He also gave power to the apostles to work miracles in his name, as the prophets wrought miracles in the name of God.—The *justice* of God. For of Him the Baptist speaks, when he says; "He shall "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Jesus Christ also bears the most eminent and expressive *titles* of Deity. The MOST HIGH, is a character evidently peculiar to the true God. Yet Zacharias, when full of the Holy Spirit, calls our Lord, "The "Highest," or the Most High.—The majesty of God is expressed, in the Old Testament, by the title, "King "of glory:" Christ is called in the New, "The Lord "of glory."—The God of Israel is called "the Holy "One;" Jesus, according to the evangelist John's application of Isaiah's vision, is adored by the seraphim as the "thrice Holy Lord."—He is also styled, "the Saviour; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; "the First and the Last;" which are titles of the Supreme Being.

Again: He is declared to be, one with God; equal with God; the same with God. He is *one* with God. "I and the Father are *one*," says the Amen, the faithful and the true Witness. ONE; not in *person*, for they are distinct: besides, the word ἕν, is in the neuter gender, and will not bear such an interpretation. Nor in *consent*; for the sense is too low: it asserts nothing of our Divine Lord, but what may be affirmed of every creature that is perfectly holy. All the saints in light, and all the angels in glory, are one with the Father, by a consent of will; they having no inclination, no desire, contrary to his. It must, therefore, be an unity of *essence* that is here intended. And that it is so appears from the context. For Jesus having declared, in the immediately preceding verses, that "his sheep shall never perish," and that none shall pluck them, either out of his own, or out of his Father's hands; adds, to confirm the assertion, and to justify his claim of invincible, Divine

power; "I and the Father are ONE." It is, therefore, an *unity of power* which he means. But he who aſſerts, that two are one by an unity of power; affirms that they are one by an unity of eſſence. A Chriſtian, in the preſent ſtate, may be one with God, by an unity of conſent; he having nothing to do, in order to ſuch an unity, but cordially to acquieſce in the methods of Divine providence and grace: but he could not without blaſphemy ſay; 'Theſe, or thoſe, ſhall never periſh; 'nor ſhall any one pluck them out of mine, or my 'Father's hand. I and the Father are one.' But that which removes every doubt, in this reſpect, is, theſe expreſſions are explained, and our ſenſe of them ſupported, by other paſſages perfectly ſimilar.

Jeſus Chriſt is *equal* with God. "He thought it "not robbery to be equal with God," ſays an unerring writer. This equality muſt include ſomething greater, and ſomething more Divine, than an unity of conſent between Chriſt and the Father. Nothing ſhort of an unity *of eſſence* can anſwer the import of the phraſe; for, otherwiſe, it would contradict that high demand, ſo often repeated by Jehovah; "To whom will ye "liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, "that we may be like?"—Some, perhaps, may ſay; 'Jeſus Chriſt is equal with God, becauſe the Father 'has exalted him to an equality.' An *equality*, in what reſpect? Of *nature?* Our adverſaries cannot ſuppoſe it. Of *offices*, *truſts*, and *honours?* But the delegation and grant of theſe neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that he who receives them is, in *that reſpect*, inferior to him who confers them. That the Father therefore, ſhould exalt Chriſt to an *equality* with him, implies a contradiction: becauſe in whatever reſpect any one is exalted by him, in that very reſpect he muſt be *inferior* to him. Jeſus Chriſt we freely allow, is highly exalted by the Father; but that exaltation regards his perſon, character, and ſtate, *as mediator;* under which conſideration, though he is the church's head, yet he is the Father's righteous

ſervant.—Beſides, the glory of the Great Supreme muſt be incommunicable.

Again: To be *one* with God; to be *equal* with God; to be God's *own Son;* and, to *be God;* are, in the language of inſpiration, phraſes of a ſimilar import, and may be ſafely explained one by another. So, we find, the Jews underſtood them. For when our Lord ſaid, "I and the Father are one;" they took up ſtones to ſtone him. And when Jeſus aſked them the reaſon of their outragious conduct, they anſwered; "Becauſe "that thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God." From whence it is evident, that, in their opinion, to be *one* with the Father, and to *be God*, are the ſame thing — In the ſame exalted point of light they conſidered the character, SON OF GOD, as aſſumed by Jeſus Chriſt. For they looked upon him as appropriating it to himſelf, in a *proper*, not in a *figurative* ſenſe. No, they would never have made ſuch a ſtir, nor have laid ſo heavy a charge againſt him, if the only cauſe of complaint had been; That he called himſelf the Son of God, by a *metaphor*, or by *adoption*. For they conſidered themſelves as the adopted ſons of God; ſaying, "We have "one Father, even God." They, therefore, muſt mean ſomething very different from this, when they ſay; "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, "becauſe he made himſelf THE SON OF GOD." And, in another place, they explain themſelves; they let us know more fully what they underſtood by the auguſt character. For when Jeſus, vindicating his conduct in healing the impotent man on the ſabbath-day, ſaid; "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work: they "ſought the more to kill him; becauſe he not only had "broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo, that GOD WAS HIS "Father, making himſelf EQUAL WITH GOD." From which it is manifeſt, that to be "God's own Son," and to be "equal with God," were the ſame thing in their account. And, indeed, the characters, *own Son*, and *only Son*, naturally ſignify an *equality*, a *ſameneſs* of

eſſence.—We have no reaſon, therefore, to be ſurpriſed that the Jews, taking his words in their proper ſenſe, ſhould think that he claimed and aſſerted an equality with God. Nor did our Lord give them any intimation, that they had miſunderſtood him; nor yet the evangeliſt, as he does in ſeveral other inſtances of much leſs importance; which ſilence is a ſtrong preſumptive proof, that they were not under a miſtake about the ſenſe of the words: for ſuch a miſtake, on the principles of our oppoſers, might have been an occaſion of idolatry in them; and a miſtake of that kind, not remarked by the hiſtorian, would be calculated to anſwer the ſame pernicious purpoſe in ſucceeding generations.

Nothing can be more oppoſite than the conduct of thoſe Jews, who accuſed Chriſt of blaſphemy; and that of others, who ſaid of Herod, "It is the voice of a god, "and not of a man." When, therefore, we juſtify the one, we muſt condemn the other. The *former* will not allow Jeſus to ſpeak of himſelf as God, becauſe he is a man: the *latter* will not have Herod to expreſs himſelf as a man, but aſcribe to him the voice of God. Now if Providence condemn the impiety of *theſe*, by puniſhing Herod in a ſignal manner, for not rejecting their blaſphemous applauſe; Heaven, on the hypotheſis of our oppoſers, muſt approve the language of *thoſe* who exclaim againſt Jeſus Chriſt, for making himſelf equal with God. And if their charge of blaſphemy had been founded on a miſtake, by taking his words in a wrong ſenſe; he ought, one would think, to have ſet them right, by explaining the terms he uſed. But if he refuſed to correct ſo dangerous a miſtake on *their* account, yet was it not neceſſary that he ſhould have done it on *ours*? that when we read his goſpel, we might not entertain the deteſtable thought, that he equalled himſelf with the Moſt High. If, however, he thought it proper not to explain himſelf, at that time; yet it might have been expected, that his diſciples ſhould have given us the

true ſenſe of the myſterious words, when they reported them.

But, ſo far from this, the evangeliſts and apoſtles, who undoubtedly knew his meaning; and who knew alſo that he was condemned for a deſign to *aboliſh* the law of Moſes, and for having *blaſphemed* the ſovereign majeſty of God, by claiming an equality with him; clear him in the *former* caſe, and leave us perfectly ſatisfied, by ſhewing in what ſenſe he aboliſhed the law, and in what reſpects he fulfilled it. But, as to the *latter*, they take no notice of it. Nay, they not only forbear to vindicate him from the charge of blaſphemy, but ſeem to write as if they intended to confirm the accuſation. For, knowing what had paſſed, they give him ſuch titles of grandeur and Divinity after his reſurrection, as he never aſſumed while he was upon earth. What is it, then, on the hypotheſis of our opponents, but to authorize the charge of blaſphemy, which the Jews faſtened upon him, for Paul to aſſert; "He thought it not robbery TO BE EQUAL WITH "GOD?"

Further: After theſe invincible reaſons to the contrary, for invincible they are on the principles of our adverſaries; the apoſtles repreſent their Maſter as being the *ſame* with God; by ſaying many ſublime things of him, which never were, and which never could be ſaid of any but the true God, without impiety. They call him GOD; GOD, with the higheſt epithets. For example: They call him THE GREAT GOD; THE TRUE GOD; GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER. In their infallible writings he is denominated, THE LORD; (the expreſſion by which the Seventy render the moſt auguſt names of God) THE LORD OF GLORY; MY LORD AND MY GOD; THE GOD OF ISRAEL; THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME. Such are the characters given by the apoſtles to Jeſus Chriſt, by which to juſtify him againſt the charge of "making himſelf equal with God;" and by

which to confute the formal and solemn accusation, drawn up against him in the face of the whole world, under which he died!

The genuine import of several of those titles which I have just mentioned, has been already considered: I shall, therefore, only just touch upon a few of them. THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, is a title given to Jesus Christ by the angel to Zacharias, when foretelling the honourable and successful work of John the Baptist. These are his words: "And many of the children of Israel shall he "turn to THE LORD THEIR GOD. And he shall go "before Him, in the spirit and power of Elias." He before whom the Baptist went, was the Lord, the God of Israel. But He before whom he went, was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the God of Israel.

He is called THE TRUE GOD. "We know that the "Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding "that we may know him that is true: and we are in "him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. THIS "IS THE TRUE GOD, and eternal life." That interpretation which refers these words, "This is the true "God," to the Father, and not to the Son, is sufficiently refuted by producing the passage.

THE GREAT GOD, is another of his Divine titles. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious "appearing of THE GREAT GOD, and, or even, our "Saviour Jesus Christ." The article * which, in the original, is put before *Great God*, and belongs equally to *Saviour*, is a proof that both these characters are applied to the same Person; a certain proof, that our Lord is here called THE GREAT GOD, as well as THE SAVIOUR. The adjective *great*, being connected with the term *Saviour*, as well as with the term *God*; which is the reason why the Greek article is put before the epithet *great*, and not before the noun *God*.

* τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος, Tit. ii. 13.

The ſame divinely glorious Perſon is called, GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER. "Of whom, as con-"cerning the fleſh, Chriſt came, WHO IS OVER ALL, "GOD BLESSED FOR EVER." The earneſt deſire of our opponents, to evade the force of this paſſage, is evident by their maintaining, that the words, "who is "over all, God bleſſed for ever," relate to God the Father; though he is not ſo much as mentioned in the preceding verſes, and though the term *Chriſt* is the noun, to which the relative *who* naturally and neceſſarily belongs.

CHAPTER III.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true God, the Chriſtian Religion has not ſufficient Criteria, by which to diſtinguiſh it from Idolatry and Impoſture.

AND now, if the principles of our adverſaries be true, it is no very difficult thing to make good of the *Chriſtian*, what we have already proved of the *Jewiſh* religion: that is, horrid idea! it is not diſtinguiſhable from idolatry and impoſture.

Not from *idolatry*. For in what does idolatry conſiſt, but in confounding the creature with the Creator? And what is confounding the creature with the Creator, but inveſting the *former* with the peculiar honours and eſſential glory of the *latter?* Herod, as before obſerved, was guilty of blaſphemy, and the people of idolatry, when he received their impious applauſe; "It is the voice "of a god and not of a man;" though they conſidered him ſtill as a real man. They who caſt a grain of incenſe before an idol, were guilty of idolatry, though they did it with reluctance. One could not ſwear by the

emperor's head, without being guilty of the same crime; though nobody, on that account, could imagine the emperor to be God. But it would be the height of idolatry to call him God, and to pay him Divine honours, as the Romans did, on some occasions. Because idolatry does not only consist in giving to a creature *all* that is due to the Creator; but in giving *any thing* to the former, which belongs to none but the latter. The sacred writers, however, not only ascribe to Jesus Christ *a part* of what is peculiar to God; but they agree in attributing to him *all* the most peculiar and essential characteristics of his glory. They ascribe to Jesus the most magnificent of all Divine works. To him they attribute the power and wisdom, the immensity and eternity of God, with other perfections of the Divine nature. They also give him God's titles, names, and glory. How, then, would it be possible to confound the creature with the Creator to a greater degree?

It may, perhaps, be said; 'Though the writers of 'the New Testament speak of Christ as one of that 'partakes, in some measure, of the glory of the Deity; 'yet, that he might not be accused of a design to 'confound himself with God, he expressly declared, "The Father is greater than I."—But this is far from invalidating our argument. A person, for instance, who loves money, who is really a covetous man, and who has bowed all his life at the shrine of Mammon, will readily allow, That God is the chief good, and to be loved above all riches. Yet such an acknowledgment will neither acquit him from the charge of covetousness, nor from the guilt of idolatry.—A man who should assume the titles and names of God, with a view to be worshipped, would set himself up for an idol, though he were once and again to confess, That God is greater than he. Or, to vary the comparison, a subject who should ascribe to himself all the works of his sovereign; assume his titles; and call himself, the true king, the great king, and the lord of the state, whom all around

are bound to obey;—who ſhould cauſe himſelf to be addreſſed as king, and exact ſuch honours as were never given to any but the real monarch; would certainly be guilty of high-treaſon, though he might have ſaid, once at leaſt, The king is greater than I.

Again: The Chriſtian religion, according to the Socinian hypotheſis, is not diſtinguiſhable from *impoſture*; is little better than an impious comedy, which is calculated to diſhonour God and deceive mankind. For, ſhocking to imagine! Jeſus Chriſt appears in the church much like an actor on the ſtage; who takes the names and titles of a king; who attributes to himſelf his works, and requires his honours, without being really what he pretends to be. Yet with this difference, a player on the ſtage, when acting the part of a ſovereign, does not pretend that the play is an important reality; nor that the ſpectators ſhould pay him the honours of royalty, after the repreſentation; nor yet that they ſhould be ſincerely perſuaded he is a king, while the play continues. But here, according to the impious genius of the Socinian ſyſtem, we have a kind of comedy, in which a mere man calls himſelf GOD; the GREAT GOD; the MIGHTY GOD; and the TRUE GOD;—who requires Divine honours, and, *as* God, has received them from his moſt eminent diſciples, though he depend on God for his very exiſtence.

That the Chriſtian religion is turned, by the Socinian ſyſtem, into an empty appearance and mere ſhew, is evident. For you find in it, a *repreſentative* God and a *metaphorical* ſacrifice; an atonement, that is only ſo in *appearance*, and an *imaginary* hell: for the wicked, according to the Socinians, ſhall be annihilated.

'But the miracles which Jeſus wrought were true and 'real; nor ought they to be compared with the 'repreſentations of the ſtage.' This conſideration, detached from other things, is of little weight. For of what worth are miracles performed by one, who attempted to ſeat himſelf on the throne of the Deity? If Jeſus

uſurp the glory of God, neither humility, nor juſtice, nor zeal for God, nor love to men, can be found in him. On this ſuppoſition, all his virtues and all his piety are obſcured and loſt: and in their ſtead we behold, pride and ambition, injuſtice and ſacrilege, blaſphemy and ſeduction. For as miracles, accompanied with holineſs, are evidently wrought by the Spirit of God; ſo thoſe works, however amazing, which patronize blaſphemy and idolatry, ought ever to be conſidered as proceeding from the ſpirit of darkneſs.

But I ſhall not further enlarge on this argument, nor any longer defile my paper with ſuch horrid ſuppoſitions. Enough, I perſuade myſelf, has been ſaid to prove, into what a dreadful abyſs the principles of our adverſaries lead. Enough alſo has been ſaid to evince, that the DEITY of Jeſus Chriſt is ESSENTIAL to the Chriſtian religion; which is the grand principle I propoſed to demonſtrate.

SECTION VI.

The principal objections answered; and some Considerations, adapted to relieve the mind respecting the Difficulties which attend this Great Mystery.

CHAPTER I.

Divine Revelation, not depraved Reason, to be our Guide in all inquiries of this nature.

HAVING established the truth, by arguments drawn from the Records of Inspiration; our next business is, to answer the principal objections, which are made by our opponents. They argue against us both from reason and Scripture; but while we are firmly persuaded that neither sound reason, nor the Holy Scriptures, rightly understood, will afford any *real* objection against us; we cannot forbear observing, that our opposers lay more stress on arguments drawn from *reason*, than on those derived from *Divine Revelation*. Strange as this conduct may appear to some, who are not versed in these controversies, we cannot easily question the fact, if we consider the language of their most celebrated writers.—Smalcius, for instance, is not ashamed thus to express himself; 'We believe, that 'though we should find it, not ONCE, nor TWICE, but 'VERY FREQUENTLY AND MOST EXPRESSLY written 'in the Scripture, *That God was made man;* it would

' be much better, as it is an abſurd propoſition, ENTIRELY ' CONTRARY TO SOUND REASON, and full of blaſphemy, ' to invent ſome way of ſpeaking, which might render ' it ſafe to be affirmed of God, rather than to underſtand ' it in the literal ſenſe*.' As if he had ſaid, We are

* Theſe are his words: ' Credimus, etiamſi non *ſemel* atque ' *iterum*, ſed SATIS CREBRO ET DISERTISSIME SCRIPTUM ' extaret, *Deum eſſe hominem factum*, multo ſatius eſſe, quia hæc ' res ſit abſurda, ET SANAE RATIONI PLANE CONTRARIA, et ' in Deum blaſphema, MODUM ALIQUEM DICENDI COMMINISCI, ' quo iſta de Deo dici poſſint, quam iſta ſimpliciter ita ut verba ' ſonant intelligere.' SMAL. *Homil.* VIII. ad Cap. I *Joh.*

To theſe bold aſſertions of SMALCIUS, in oppoſition to the doctrine of the incarnation, may be added the no leſs unwarrantable declarations of SOCINUS and SCHLICHTINGIUS: the *former*, in reference to the ſubſtitution and atonement of Chriſt; the *latter*, relating to the efficacy of Divine grace and the freedom of the human will.—' Ego quidem, ſaith SOCINUS, ' etiamſi non *ſemel* ſed SAEPE id in Sacris Monumentis ſcriptum ' extaret, non idcirco tamen rem ita prorſus ſe habere crederem, ' ut vos opinamini. Quum ea quæ fieri non poſſe aperte conſtat, ' Divinis etiam Oraculis ea fuiſſe in ſpeciem atteſtantibus, ' nequaquam admittantur; et idcirco ſacra verba in ALIUM ' SENSUM quam ipſa ſonant per INUSITATOS ETIAM TROPOS ' quandoque explicantur.' *De Servat.* Part. III. Cap. VI. That is, Though it [the doctrine of the atonement and ſatisfaction of Chriſt] were found, not only *once*, but FREQUENTLY WRITTEN in the Holy Scriptures; I, indeed, would not therefore believe it to be entirely as you ſuppoſe. Though the Divine Oracles may atteſt things to be ſo, in appearance; yet they cannot, by any means, be admitted, becauſe they are very evidently impoſſible: and, therefore, the ſacred words are ſometimes explained, EVEN BY UNUSUAL TROPES, to a SENSE DIFFERENT from their literal ſignification.

The following are the words of SCHLICHTINGIUS: ' Itaque ' non quia utrumque Scriptura dicat propterea hæc inter ſe ' non pugnare concludendum eſt; ſed potius quia hæc inter ſe ' pugnant ideo alterutrum a Scriptura non dici ſtatuendum eſt.' *Ad Meiſn. Def. Socin.* p. 20.—That is, We cannot conclude, becauſe the Scripture affirms them both, [i. e. the *energy* of Divine grace, and the *freedom* of the human will] that therefore they are not repugnant the one to the other; but, as theſe two

determined to regulate, not our theological ſentiments, by the Scriptures; but the Scriptures, by our preconceived opinions. But let us conſider this point a little more particularly.

If human reaſon had not been corrupted by ſin, we might have placed a great degree of dependence upon it; yet even then it would not have been rational, to rely more on the powers of our own underſtanding, than on the light of Divine Revelation, ſuppoſing ſuch a Revelation to have been enjoyed: becauſe the knowledge of man, when his reaſon was unimpaired, was limited; but the knowledge of God is infinite. What a diſparity, then, muſt there be, when the human underſtanding is not only limited, but *corrupted;* when the unavoidable commerce between a man's thoughts and his depraved paſſions, fills his mind with a multitude of prejudices, which have a tendency in various ways to diſguiſe, or conceal, the truth!—Were we bound to believe nothing but what appears conformable to reaſon, in its preſent ſtate, we might ſoon reject the great objects revealed in the goſpel, in general. For, after all the ſtrenuous efforts of our adverſaries, to remove the grand difficulties attending the Chriſtian religion; there are, and there always will be, ſuch depths in it, as are unfathomable by the plummet of human reaſon. On this account, the apoſtle of the Gentiles calls the goſpel *fooliſhneſs.* If the doctrines of Chriſtianity had nothing myſterious and inexplicable in them, there would be no difficulty in believing; nor would faith be any more the gift of God, than the perſuaſion we have of natural truths. Conſe-

things are inconſiſtent, we ought rather to conclude, that one of them is not mentioned in Scripture.

The above quotations from *Smalcius* and *Socinus*, with many judicous remarks on *the Uſe and Abuſe of Reaſon, relating to the Myſteries of Faith*, may be found in the learned, accurate, and evangelical WITSIUS. See his *Miſcell. Sac.* Tom. II. Exercit. XVII.

quently, there would be no more occaſion for the agency of the Holy Spirit, in order to our believing the truths of the goſpel, than there is to our underſtanding the problems of geometry.

To act on this principle of our oppoſers is to treat God, as if he were leſs worthy of credit than an honeſt man. A fallible mortal, who has not forfeited his character, as a perſon of veracity, would take it deſervedly ill, if, when ſpeaking of any extraordinary fact, of which he was an eye-witneſs, he was to ſay, 'Take my word 'for it; it is as I aſſert:' and we ſhould reply, 'We 'muſt conſider what you ſay. If we find it agreeable 'to our reaſon, we will believe you; if not, we ſhall 'entirely reject your teſtimony.' If, then, ſuch language would be reckoned indecent towards a fellow-worm; what muſt we think of a ſimilar conduct, in regard to God, who is equally incapable of deceiving us, as he is of being deceived?

'But all divines have uſed the ſame prudence in 'matters of leſs importance to the glory of God. They 'have thought themſelves warranted to underſtand, not 'in a literal, but a figurative ſenſe, all ſuch paſſages of 'Scripture as would otherwiſe appear inconſiſtent with 'the perfection and glory of the Divine Majeſty. As 'for example, when it is ſaid, "God came down; God 'was wroth:" and when ſuch expreſſions are uſed, as 'attribute the members of a human body to the Supreme 'Being.'—To which I reply; The inſtances adduced are far from being parallel. The doctrine of the incarnation is not incompatible with the glory of the Divine Majeſty, as is the opinion of the Anthropomorphites: for we cannot aſcribe to God the parts of a human body, without ſuppoſing bounds, mutability, and imperfection in him. But the doctrine of the incarnation infers no ſuch impious abſurdities. The Divine nature undergoes no alteration, by its union with the human nature. Nor do the expreſſions of Scripture, underſtood in their moſt natural ſenſe, and compared one with another, impoſe

a neceſſity upon us of being Anthropomorphites; or to attribute our weakneſſes and imperfections to God. For nature and reaſon do not ſpeak louder than Divine Revelation, that God is *unchangeable*—That the heaven of heavens *cannot contain* him—That he is *not like a man*, nor any of his creatures.

If reaſon were to be the rule of our faith, Revelation would be ſuperſeded. For, to what purpoſe ſhould God make known the counſel of his will, if reaſon were allowed to ſay; 'This is not the counſel of God. It 'cannot be, for I do not comprehend it?' Thus the conſcience would be influenced, not by Revelation, but by the doubt which reaſon had raiſed upon it.—Beſides, if it were lawful for human reaſon to ſit in judgment on Divine Revelation, the darkneſs introduced on our minds, by ſin, could never be diſſipated. For how ſhould reaſon, proud of her own pretended abilities, and reſolved to correct Revelation itſelf, be enlightened? According to this arrogant and ſelf-ſufficient notion, faith in the Divine teſtimony is entirely ſet aſide; reaſon being reſolved on following her own light, in preference to that of God in the Scriptures. So that, inſtead of ſaying, I believe ſuch a propoſition, how incredible ſoever it may ſeem, becauſe God has revealed it; we muſt ſay, Though God has revealed it in the moſt plain and expreſs terms, we will not believe it, becauſe it appears incredible to us.—Again: Were we thus to exalt reaſon, what is uſually called Divine faith, would be much inferior to that which is human: becauſe we ſhould not pay ſo great a regard to the declarations of GOD, as to thoſe of our parents, maſters and tutors; on whoſe bare authority we receive a great number of truths, relating to the affairs of common life. But, in ſuch a caſe, where is humility, where is that filial, teachable ſpirit, which is one of the marks of our adoption and regeneration? What need of ſubmitting to the dictates of Inſpiration, becauſe it is the Eternal Sovereign who ſpeaks; when we have nothing to do

but convince ourſelves of all neceſſary truths, by their own internal characters; and to reject, or embrace them, in exact proportion as they agree or diſagree with the light of our own underſtanding?

'Reaſon, our opponents will ſay, *reaſon* is the foundation of faith: conſequently, faith cannot be more certain than reaſon.'—Reaſon, I confeſs, leads to Revelation; becauſe we are taught by it, that GOD is infallibly wiſe, and that *we* are liable to err; that we cannot, therefore, do better than regard the light of Revelation, in preference to the uncertain conjectures of our own minds. But then, as reaſon leads us to this infallible rule, which was given by uncontrollable authority; ſhe requires us to receive, with ſubmiſſion, whatever the Great Revealer aſſerts, as a fact; commands, as a duty; or propoſes, as an object of faith.—We may diſtinguiſh three things in faith; and theſe are, the principle, the diſcretion, and the concluſion of it. That fundamental maxim and firſt idea in Revealed religion, 'Whatever God ſays is true;' I call the *principle* of faith. Its *diſcretion*, is that examination by which we aſſure ourſelves that God ſpeaks, and endeavour to underſtand what he means. And the *concluſion* of it, is that aſſent which we give to the truth of a propoſition, becauſe it is contained in the Revelation of God; and becauſe we are perfectly ſatisfied, that whatever God ſays muſt be true.—Theſe things premiſed, I readily grant, that reaſon leads us to the *principle* of faith. By the pureſt light of our underſtanding we are perſuaded, that whatever God ſays is true. Reaſon alſo, I freely acknowledge, makes the *diſcretion* of faith: becauſe it is that faculty of the mind which is impreſſed with thoſe characters of Divinity, that are contained in Revelation; and afterwards inquires, whether ſuch or ſuch a doctrine be revealed, by examining and comparing one paſſage of Scripture with another. But this is all; and reaſon muſt acquieſce in what God ſays, without preſuming to call into queſtion the truth or the propriety of his words,

when once their meaning appears. The contrary disposition is not divine faith, but an intolerable temerity of a kind of reason that would be independent on God. We may, therefore, safely conclude, without the imputation of rashness, that the language of Smalcius, in the passage produced, is pregnant with blasphemy against the Revelation of God: and in direct opposition to it we should say; Though this proposition, 'God was made man,' appeared much more contrary to reason than it really does; yet we ought to conclude, that we are under a mistake, and that the proposition expresses a wonderful fact and a capital truth, because it is contained in THE WORD OF JEHOVAH.—These two declarations compared, it will appear, that the *former* is daring and presumptuous; as it includes a manifest preference of the powers of our own understanding, to the infallible dictates of inspiration; which is directly contrary to the nature of true faith. But the *latter* is modest, humble, rational; as it implies a reverence for Divine authority, and an evident preference of the light of God's Revelation, to that of our own reason; dispositions these, which are essential to real faith *.

* To what is here said by our Author on this interesting subject, I beg leave to subjoin the reasoning of a late elegant and evangelical writer, and the testimony of a great genius in the beginning of the last century, relating to the same truth. The former expresses himself thus: 'We by no means approve of a 'general and indiscriminate outcry against reason. This would 'be injurious to our sacred cause, and imply a reflection on our 'holy religion; as though it could not bear the scrutiny of reason. 'Whereas it will always appear to be a reasonable system; a 'reasonable service; reason in its highest refinement.—If indeed 'reason affects to be self-sufficient, she is an impotent usurper: 'but if she act in a state of dependence, she is a valuable 'servant. Does she pretend to be our light, in matters of a spiri-'tual and heavenly nature? she is then a despicable dotard, or 'an *ignis fatuus*. Does she kindle her torch at the fire of 'Revelation? she may then be a discerner of doctrines, and we 'will call her "The candle of the Lord." Submitting to her 'Divine Author, and learning at the feet of Omniscience, she

CHAPTER II.

An objection from the ſuppoſed Silence of the Scripture, anſwered.

THAT we may not be ſuſpected of weakening the arguments of our adverſaries, we ſhall make uſe of their own words; and if, to avoid prolixity, we contract them a little, their objections will not be the leſs forcible.—The argument, then, which appears to us to be the firſt in order, and one of the moſt plauſible, is that which they form on the ſuppoſed *ſilence* of the Scripture, as to the myſtery of the Incarnation.

' is reaſon *in her ſenſes:* preſuming to be equal with the All-wiſe; ' undertaking to comprehend his works, or daring to diſpute ' his word; ſhe is reaſon *run mad.* In this quality we diſclaim ' and caſhier her; in the other we cheriſh and employ her.—' Though I could not, by the powers of my reaſon diſcover—' though I cannot, by the excerciſe of my reaſon fully explain—' all the articles of my belief; yet I can "give a reaſon," a ' very ſatisfactory reaſon, "of the hope that is in me." This ' is what the apoſtle requires us to do; and without doing this, ' we are neither wiſe nor happy.'

The latter bears his teſtimony in the following words: ' The ' prerogative of God comprehends the whole [man; and is ' extended, as well to the *reaſon*, as to the *will* of man: that is, ' that man renounce himſelf wholly, and draw near to God. ' Wherefore, as we are to *obey his law*, though we find a ' reluctation in our *will*; ſo we are to *believe his word*, though ' we find a reluctation in our *reaſon*, for if we believe only that ' which is agreeable to our *reaſon*, we give aſſent to the *matter*, ' not to the *author*; which is no more than we would do towards ' a ſuſpected and diſcredited witneſs.—Sacred theology is ground-' ed on, and muſt be deduced from, the Oracles of God: and ' not from the light of nature, or the dictates of reaſon—"To "THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY; if they ſpeak not "according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them." Lord BACON's *Advancement of Learning*, p. 462, 469.

'We see, say they, that those things which are difficult 'to be believed, yet absolutely necessary to salvation, are 'very frequently and plainly expressed in the Scriptures. 'Such, for instance, as the creation of heaven and earth; 'the care which God takes of human affairs; his 'knowledge of our thoughts; the resurrection of the 'dead, and eternal life. Various things also of less 'importance, are clearly and distinctly contained in holy 'Writ. For example, "That Jesus Christ is of the "seed of David."—Now, if the incarnation of the 'supreme God were a fact, it would be an article of 'faith absolutely necessary, and at the same time very 'difficult to be believed. It ought, therefore, to have 'been very clearly asserted, in the Scripture; and so 'frequently inculcated, by the sacred writers, who 'designed to promote and secure our happiness, that 'none should have had any reason to doubt whether it 'was a part of Divine Revelation. Yet it appears to us, 'that there is no such thing contained in their writings. 'For the passages produced by our adversaries to prove 'the tenet, are of such a nature, that they are obliged to 'draw several consequences from them, before they can 'infer the incarnation of the most High God; or, that 'he was made man.—Nor is the doctrine of the incarna-'tion mentioned where it should be, supposing it were 'true. For, when Matthew and Luke write the history 'of the birth of Christ, and relate a variety of particulars, 'of much less importance than the incarnation of the 'supreme God; how is it possible they should have 'omitted, should have entirely passed over in silence, that 'wonderful fact, had it been true? They inform us, that 'Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost; that he was 'born of a virgin, in the days of Augustus, and at the 'town of Bethlehem, with many other particulars; why 'then, should they omit the most important and wonder-'ful thing, and that which was more necessary to be 'known and believed than any other in the whole 'narration? Luke has not forgotten the manger, in

'which the new-born Saviour was laid; yet he has 'omitted the incarnation of the ſupreme God, and ſays 'nothing about the hypoſtatical union of the Divine and 'human nature. How came it to paſs, that Mark 'ſhould forget the whole hiſtory of Chriſt's birth, which 'ſhould have included the incarnation; and John, whom 'they will have to ſpeak of it, ſhould paſs over it ſo 'ſlightly, and expreſs himſelf with ſo much obſcurity?— 'Again: How came the apoſtles to make no mention 'of ſo important a doctrine, when they preached the 'goſpel, and exhorted men to believe on Jeſus Chriſt; 'and, to induce them ſo to do, ſet his majeſty before 'their eyes? Read the firſt ſermon that Peter preached 'to the people, after he had received the Holy Ghoſt; 'the ſucceſs of which was ſo great, that about three 'thouſand ſouls believed on Jeſus Chriſt and were 'baptized: Conſider alſo his ſecond exhortation to the 'people, and you may ſee, that he makes no mention of 'the incarnation in either of them. Nor will you find 'it in any of this apoſtle's diſcourſes concerning Chriſt; 'whether to the rulers and elders of the people, or to 'Cornelius, or to others. Paul ſays nothing of it, in 'the ſynagogue at Antioch; in Areopagus, at Athens; 'nor before Felix and Agrippa, at Ceſarea. Yet, 'certainly, he had a favourable opportunity at Athens, 'to have explained this myſtery, when he talked to the 'Athenians about the unknown God.'

In anſwer to this objection, let the following things be conſidered. It ſeems very extraordinary, that they who have ſo little regard for the Scripture, ſhould improve its very *ſilence* into an argument againſt us. At one time they declare, 'Though the Scripture ſhould '*expreſsly* and *repeatedly* ſay, that God was made man, 'they would not believe it;' at another, they argue againſt us from the ſuppoſed *ſilence* of that ſacred Volume. Such conduct is neither candid nor conſiſtent.

This objection proceeds on a very dubious principle. It ſuppoſes that thoſe truths which are abſolutely

neceſſary to be known, yet very difficult to be believed, are moſt expreſsly and repeatedly mentioned in the Scripture. But if they mean, *every book* of the Scripture, the maxim is falſe; if *the body* of the Scripture, the reaſoning is uſeleſs; for we maintain, that the myſtery of the incarnation is expreſsly and repeatedly contained in the body of the Scripture. The maxim underſtood in the former ſenſe is ſo evidently falſe, that we need no other examples to prove it, than thoſe which are mentioned in the objection. The reſurrection of the dead and eternal life, ſo expreſsly revealed in the goſpel, are neither ſo clearly nor ſo frequently mentioned in the Old Teſtament. On the other hand, the work of creation and the conduct of Providence, which are ſo repeatedly and ſtrongly expreſſed in the Old Teſtament, are not ſo frequently found in the New.—But muſt an important and eſſential truth be contained in *all* the books of the Scripture, or in every *part* of the New Teſtament? This is neither neceſſary, nor poſſible. It is not *neceſſary:* becauſe, as the Holy Spirit has given us for the rule of our faith, not any particular book, but the whole canon of the Scripture; it is quite ſufficient if the neceſſary doctrines be found in the volume of Revelation, though they may not be included in every particular book. Nor is it *poſſible:* for in the Bible there are ſeveral epiſtles and books too much contracted, to contain *all* that is neceſſary to be known, believed, and performed.

The objection ſuppoſes, that a truth is not evidently contained in Scripture, when it muſt be inferred by conſequences. But here the objector is under a great miſtake, as appears from the conduct of our Lord; who proves the immortality of the ſoul, by a paſſage in the pentateuch; though that capital truth is not contained in it, in expreſs terms, but was only inferred conſequentially.—The author of this objection is under an equal miſtake, when he ſuppoſes that theſe truths;

Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost—Our Lord was born of a virgin; are of less importance to be known and believed, than the doctrine of the incarnation, had it been true. For supposing the incarnation to be a *greater mystery*, than the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit; yet the latter is no less necessary to be *believed* than the former. That Jesus Christ came not into the world by ordinary means, is a fact so necessary to be known, that without it we cannot be assured, either of the mystery of the incarnation, or of the benefits of his death. For if the humanity of Jesus had not been free from original guilt and original depravity, it could neither have been united to the Divine Person of the Son of God; nor have suffered a death capable of expiating the sins of mankind. This consideration will be of use hereafter.

But may we not retort upon our adversaries? May not the silence of the Scripture be improved, with equal force, against the conception of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and his birth of a virgin? Yet these are truths, essentially necessary truths, by the confession of all the world. Our opponents cannot dispute them any more than we; because the conception of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is the first foundation, according to them, of his august character, THE SON OF GOD. Nor will they deny, that ancient prophecy would have been unfulfilled, if Jesus had not been born of a virgin *. These truths are also absolutely necessary.—Besides, they are difficult to be believed: for there have been few things in the world more surprising, than to hear of a man born of *a virgin*.—We may, therefore, put the same questions to our opposers, on the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, which they do to us, on the incarnation. We ask, then, if the conception of Christ had been as is generally supposed, how it came to pass that Mark should pass it over in silence? Why

* Isaiah vii. 14.

does not John mention it? Why did not the apoſtles always inſiſt on the very momentous and neceſſary truth, when they laboured to convert ſinners to Jeſus Chriſt? Read the firſt ſermon of Peter to the people, after he had received the Holy Spirit; conſider alſo his ſecond diſcourſe, after he had healed the lame man, who lay at the gate of the temple; and you muſt ſoon perceive, that he ſays nothing expreſsly about the miraculous conception and birth of his Divine Maſter. The ſame apoſtle ſpeaks afterwards of Jeſus, to the rulers and elders of the people, to Cornelius and others; but ſays not a word of the aſtoniſhing conception and wonderful birth of his Lord. Nor does Paul ſay any thing of theſe aſtoniſhing facts, in his diſcourſes in the ſynagogue, at Antioch; in Areopagus, at Athens; nor before Felix and Agrippa. But ought we from hence to conclude, that the miraculous conception of Jeſus is not a fundamental article of the Chriſtian faith? Of this our opponents themſelves will judge.

'Yes, they will ſay, but Mathew and Luke are not 'ſilent on this particular.'—Granted; nor are *all* the ſacred penmen ſilent concerning the incarnation. We produce the expreſs words of the Holy Ghoſt, who informs us; That Chriſt is "IMMANUEL; GOD with us;" that "the myſtery of godlineſs is great, GOD WAS MANIFEST "IN THE FLESH;" and that "the Word was GOD, "and was MADE FLESH." To what purpoſe, then, is that enumeration of particular paſſages, which the author of the objection has made? If he means, that the incarnation is not to be found in the Scripture, becauſe it is not contained in the paſſages to which he refers; we reply, His induction of particulars is imperfect, and cannot warrant his concluſion. For he has cautiouſly omitted thoſe paſſages which we produce, in order to prove our ſentiment. But if he only intended to collect the occaſions on which he ſuppoſes it was proper, for the honour of Jeſus Chriſt, that the inſpired writers ſhould have mentioned the incarnation; we aſk

in our turn, Why, on the same occasions, they did not mention his conception by the Holy Spirit, and his birth of a virgin? For if, according to our principles, the Son of God, by the miracle of his *incarnation*, became IMMANUEL; Jesus Christ, according to theirs, became the SON OF GOD, by the miracle of his *conception*.

The perfect holiness of Jesus Christ is a truth essential to the Christian religion, and a doctrine of the last importance to our spiritual comfort. The unerring writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, makes all our consolation depend upon it. "For such an high-priest "became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate "from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: "who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer "up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the "people's." Yet, if you look into the evangelical history, you will find little, very little, indeed, relating to this capital truth. There, to your amazement, you hear Jesus Christ refusing, to appearance, the epithet *good*; when he says to the young man, "There is none "good but one, that is God." You find, indeed, that our Lord says, "I am the light of the world;" but you must reason to know, whether he mean the light of holiness, or the light of truth. You hear him saying, "I am meek and lowly in heart;" but you must learn by inferences, whether his meekness and humility be attended with all other virtues; and also, whether those virtues reside in him to perfection. You may hear him ask his adversaries, with confidence, "Which of you "convinceth me of sin?" and this, I acknowledge, implies, that he is not an offender like men in common; but yet he does not expressly say, 'I am without sin.' —I conclude, therefore, that it is not necessary the most interesting truths should be contained in the Scripture, in express and formal terms; and that it suffices to infer them by just and reasonable consequence. For though we had not been favoured with the epistle to the Hebrews; though several passages in other epistles,

expreſsly to the ſame point, had never been read by us; and though we had never heard that thoſe words in Iſaiah, "He had done no violence, neither was any "deceit in his mouth," related to Jeſus Chriſt; yet we ſhould have been aſſured that he was perfectly holy and righteous; both by the analogy of faith, and by a multitude of texts, from which we might have inferred the important conſequence.—Hence alſo it appears, that there is no neceſſity for a capital and fundamental truth, to be mentioned in every page of the Scripture, nor yet in every book of which that ſacred Volume conſiſts. For the whole œconomy of ſalvation, and all our happineſs, depend on the conſummate holineſs of Jeſus Chriſt; and yet you may read a great part of the Bible, and not find it ſo much as once mentioned.

But, more directly to anſwer this objection, it may be obſerved; That the ſacred writers keep a myſterious ſilence, on ſome occaſions, even on matters of great importance; which ſilence may be attributed to various cauſes. Sometimes to the nature of that œconomy under which they wrote. So Moſes and the prophets did not ſpeak ſo clearly of the life to come, as Jeſus Chriſt; becauſe the perſpicuity of Revelation, in this reſpect, was to be a diſtinguiſhing character of the Meſſiah's appearance; and life and immortality were to be revealed by him. Nor was it agreeable to the wiſdom of God, that Chriſt, in his perſonal miniſtry, ſhould ſpeak ſo clearly concerning the ſpirituality, or ſo fully concerning the myſteries, of his kingdom; as the apoſtles did after his aſcenſion, when led into all the truth by the Holy Spirit.—At other times the Spirit of wiſdom makes uſe of the cleareſt and eaſieſt things, to lead us into thoſe which are more abſtruſe and difficult. The great things which the apoſtles were called to declare, were *facts* and *doctrines*; ſome of which doctrines were very myſterious. The *former* were objects of ſenſe; the *latter* abſtract and ſpiritual. Now it would have been prepoſterous for them to have recommended matters of

fact, by first recommending mysterious doctrines: because the order of nature and reason requires, that the latter should be recommended, by relating and authenticating the former. If only matters of fact had been necessary to be laid before us, the four gospels would have comprised the whole of the New Testament; they being the history of such facts as are necessary to our salvation. But as, in the grand scheme of salvation, there are mysterious doctrines, with which it is requisite mankind should be acquainted; the apostles were inspired to write the other parts of the New Testament, that we might be informed of them. And if so, it is far from being strange that Peter, in his first sermon, after he had received the Holy Ghost, should engage the attention of his auditors, by making remarks on that Divine effusion, the effects of which were so sensible and so wonderful, without saying any thing about the incarnation. Nor is it at all amazing that the same apostle, after he had healed the poor beggar that lay at the gate of the temple, and perceived the astonishment of the people, should take occasion to speak of our Lord's resurrection, in whose name he wrought the miracle; and that he should insist on the leading circumstances of the life and death of his Divine Master, as being adapted to enlighten their minds and alarm their consciences, to soften their hearts and subdue their pride—much better adapted, to answer these impotant ends, than a discourse on the mysterious hypostatical union would have been. The same remark may be made on the conduct of Paul, on similar occasions.—The silence objected against us is frequently to be ascribed to the marvellous condescension of God, in proportioning his instructions to our capacities. As it is written, "I have yet many "things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." And again, "We have many things to say and hard to "be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." These assertions, and the reason on which they proceed, shew the propriety of Peter's conduct and that of other

apoſtles, when ſpeaking to ſinners not yet converted, or to ſuch as had but juſt received the light of the goſpel: whom they treat as infants, in the grace of God and the knowledge of Chriſt, rather than as adults; laying before them the plaineſt truths, and reſerving the more abſtruſe till a fitter ſeaſon occurred.

The objection boldly ſuggeſts, that the Scripture is *entirely* ſilent, as to the doctrine of the incarnation. But this is a great miſtake. For we find hardly any remarkable occaſion to make it known, but the Holy Spirit improves it for that purpoſe. Jeſus, at his birth, is called "God with us." At his baptiſm, he is honoured in ſuch a manner as cannot agree to a mere creature. In the hiſtory of his life and miniſtry, by the evangeliſts, the names and attributes, the works and worſhip of God, are frequently aſcribed to him. And the apoſtles, in their invaluable writings, act in a ſimilar way, by deſcribing and treating him as the true God.

The objection aſſerts, that the paſſages adduced to prove our doctrine are ſuch, that we are obliged to draw ſeveral concluſions before they can ſerve our turn. And what if they were? this would not invalidate the argument formed upon them, provided the concluſions be fairly drawn. But it is a miſtake. For the Scripture expreſsly aſſerts, that Jeſus Chriſt is "God manifeſted "in the fleſh"—That he is "the Word:" that "the "Word was God:" and that "the Word was made "fleſh." Here we need only take the natural ſenſe of the expreſſions, without any further reaſoning, to find the incarnation. For the term *fleſh* is taken, either for the *body*, merely; which cannot be the meaning here, becauſe Chriſt not only aſſumed a body, but a body united to a ſpirit: or it ſignifies *ſin;* but this cannot be intended, becauſe Jeſus aſſumed a holy, not a ſinful nature: or it muſt ſignify the *human nature;* and this, undoubtedly, is the ſenſe of the term. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the text is; God was manifeſt in the human nature. If we muſt reaſon, it is only for

the ſenſe of the terms; not that we may infer, by conſequences, a truth which lay concealed. For theſe two propoſitions, *God was made man—God was manifeſt in the human nature*—are perfectly equivalent.

CHAPTER III.

An Objection from John xvii. 3. anſwered.

ONE of the principal arguments in favour of the Socinian hypotheſis, is formed on thoſe words of our Lord; "This is life eternal, that they might know "thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou "haſt ſent."—'Nobody queſtions, ſays Crellius, but 'that, by the *true God*, muſt be underſtood the Supreme 'God. When, therefore, Jeſus Chriſt repreſents his 'Father to us, as *the only true God*; it follows, that 'none but the Father is the Supreme God.'

Before we return a direct anſwer, it may not be improper to make a few general remarks. Let it, then, be here obſerved, That as our Lord may be conſidered, either in a ſtate of the loweſt humiliation, or in a ſtate of the higheſt glory; ſo he is variouſly repreſented to us, according to theſe two very different conditions. Accordingly he aſſumes, in reference to the *former*, ſuch characters as expreſs his abaſement; and, with a view to the *latter*, ſuch as denote his exaltation. In the time of his humiliation, he calls himſelf "the Son "of man," much more frequently than "the Son of "God:" but, after he was glorified, his apoſtles conſtantly call him, "the Son of God;" hardly ever, "the Son of man." Before his reſurrection, his diſciples thought they ſaid a great deal in this confeſſion of their faith, "Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living

" God :" but, their light increasing with his glory, when they saw him risen from the dead, one of them said, " MY LORD, AND MY GOD!" When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he gave them an admirable pattern of devotion in what is called, 'The Lord's 'prayer;' yet in that excellent directory, the name of Christ is not once mentioned. But when the Redeemer is just leaving the world, and is going to be glorified, he says to his disciples; " Whatsoever ye shall ask the " Father in my name, he will give it you." And, after his exaltation, the church places her hope of Divine acceptance, in devotional services, entirely in his intercession; addressing her prayer and praises to the Father, through the hands of her Divine Saviour only. " Unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, " throughout all ages—Ye are an holy priesthood, to " offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus " Christ—If any man sin, we have an advocate with the " Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."—These things considered, it is no wonder that Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself in the time of his humiliation, should speak suitably to that condition; nor that, in the evangelical history, the Father is more frequently called GOD, than he; nor yet that our Mediator, on various occasions, should speak of himself, as subject to his Father; and of the Father, as the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sovereign Manager of all events.

Arguments drawn from the silence of the Scripture, are, in some cases excellent; but in others impertinent and entirely false. Will our opponents assert, for instance, that Christ is not the *redeemer;* because he taught his disciples the duties of morality, when on the mount, without expressly mentioning the work of redemption? Or, dare they affirm, that He is not an *intercessor* with God; because, when teaching his disciples to pray, he does not always direct them to ask the blessings they want, in his name?—Crellius, then, gains no advantage to his cause, by remarking; 'That Jesus

'Christ, when speaking of himself on various occasions, 'says nothing greater; nor yet his apostles, when 'speaking of him, than that he is THE SON OF GOD.' For as, on some occasions, Christ spake of himself as a man; as, on others, he spake of himself as a prophet, without saying any thing of his kingly, or priestly, office; and yet we cannot with any appearance of reason conclude from hence, that he is neither king, nor priest, nor mediator between God and man: so he might speak of himself, and the apostles might represent him, as a priest and a king, as mediator and the Son of God, on certain occasions; without speaking expressly of his Divinity, and yet not militate, in the least, against it.

To answer more directly. If our adversaries mean to prove, from this passage, that Jesus Christ is not GOD, they act inconsistently; for they acknowledge that he bears the name in the holy Scriptures. Nay, if they would hence make it appear, that he is not the TRUE GOD, they contradict themselves. For Socinus expresses himself in the following remarkable words. 'It is very 'false that we should openly declare, Jesus Christ is not 'true God. We profess to say the contrary, and declare, 'that HE IS TRUE GOD, in several of our writings, as 'well in the Latin, as in the Polish language *.'—Jesus 'Christ, says Smalcius, may be called, with a sovereign 'right, OUR GOD, and, THE TRUE GOD; and so he 'really is.' And, in another place, he assures us, 'That Jesus Christ is God, in the MOST PERFECT 'MANNER: *Perfectissimo modo.*'—If then, Jesus Christ be GOD, the TRUE GOD, and God in the most PERFECT MANNER; and if this be the sentiment of our opponents, what do they mean by adducing and arguing upon this passage? Is it their intention to prove, by taking the words in their greatest rigour of signification, that Christ is not the true God, and that the sublime title

* SOCIN. *ad Wick.* p. 49.

belongs only to the Father? But this is diametrically oppoſite to their own declarations. Let them, then, firſt agree with themſelves; after which it will be time enough for us to attempt a coalition with them. It is proper, however, to return a more particular anſwer to their objection.

Paul ſays, "I determined not to know any thing "among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified." Now, it is evident, if we underſtand this declaration in the full rigour of its literal ſenſe, that the apoſtle excludes every object from the doctrine of ſalvation, beſides his crucified Lord; but will our oppoſers from hence infer, that the Divine Father is excluded from that object which the apoſtle determined to know, in contradiſtinction to all other things? No, doubtleſs. Both they and we muſt except the Father; becauſe we find, from other paſſages of Scripture, that the knowledge of Him is abſolutely neceſſary to eternal felicity. Were we to take the words of Paul in their ſtrictly literal meaning, they would be diametrically oppoſite to the declaration of his Divine Maſter, in the text which is now under conſideration, and which our adverſaries, with ſo much confidence, object againſt us. For the apoſtle ſays, we muſt propoſe nothing to ourſelves, as the object of the doctrine of ſalvation, but the *crucified Jeſus*: while his Lord moſt ſolemnly aſſerts the neceſſity of knowing *the Father*, in order to our future happineſs. Conſequently, theſe aſſertions cannot be both true, if underſtood in the rigour of their literal meaning; but they are eaſily reconciled by ſuppoſing that Paul, when he determines "to "know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified," does not mean to exclude the Father; who, being one with the Son, is revealed by him, and known at the ſame time with him. And if our adverſaries themſelves be obliged to adopt this method of interpretation, when theſe two paſſages are to be reconciled; why will they not admit of it, when we are called to reconcile the text before us, which, according to them aſſerts, that

'the Father only is the true God;' with other paſſages of Scripture which have taught them, 'that Jeſus Chriſt 'is the true God?' If, when Paul ſays, "I determined "not to know any thing, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him "crucified," we except the Father; becauſe we are taught, by the ſame unerring Spirit, that life eternal conſiſts, not only in knowing Chriſt crucified, but alſo in the knowledge of the Father: is it reaſonable, when the Scripture calls the Father "the only true God;" that we ſhould except Jeſus Chriſt; there being other paſſages of holy Writ which declare, even by the confeſſion of our opponents, that he is the true God?

It is very remarkable, that the moſt ingenious of our antagoniſts, when handling this argument, deprive themſelves of all advantage from it, by the conceſſions which they are obliged to make. Crellius obſerves, on the paſſage, 'That the deſign of Chriſt was not to deny, 'that the idols, or gods of the Heathens, were really 'idols, or gods of the Heathens; but only to deny, 'that they were the *true God*.' And acknowledges that, if we conſider the conſtruction of the words, we ought not to connect the term *only*, with *thee, Father*. 'We 'would not, ſays he, have any one charge us with 'ſuppoſing, merely on account of the grammatical 'conſtruction of the words, that the term *only* ought to 'be connected with *thee*, or *thee Father*; for the article 'before the adverb *only* will not bear it; and, therefore, 'we muſt underſtand the verb, *to be*. For, otherwiſe 'it were as if Jeſus Chriſt had ſaid, *To know that thou 'only art the true God*; which, though true in itſelf, is 'very far from being the ſenſe of this paſſage *.'

Such conceſſions, from one who holds the firſt place among our opponents, are very conſiderable: nay, they are ſufficient to decide the queſtion in our favour. For when we produce a text of Scripture, in proof of any particular doctrine; we reaſon, either from the bare

* CRELL. *De Deo uno Patre.* Sect. I. Cap. I. p. 15, 19.

signification of the words, or from the occasion on which they were uttered. If, then, we here dispute from the *occasion* of the words, our opposers will prove nothing against us: for they allow that Christ, in this place, contrasts the true God, with the idols of the Heathen; which, though it utterly exclude every fictitious deity, yet does not in the least militate against our Immanuel's claim of Divinity. Nor will our adversaries have any advantage, by attending to the *bare signification* of the words: for they cannot infer from thence, that the Father only, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, is the true God; without connecting the adverb *only*, with *thee, Father;* which Crellius declares they do not attempt.

The passage before us, far from attributing Deity to the Father, in opposition to the Son, evidently ascribes the infinite honour to them both. For the second member of the proposition is equivalent to this; That they may know that He whom thou hast sent is also the true God. And the meaning of the whole text is; That they may know thee the only true God, *with Him* whom thou hast sent.—As if one should say to the emperor; This is the welfare of Hungary, that they may know thee to be the only true king, and arch-duke Joseph, whom thou hast appointed over them. Which proposition would be equivalent to this; That they may know thee the only true king, with arch-duke Joseph thy son.

Though we might exemplify this way of speaking, by multitudes of instances in profane authors, yet we shall content ourselves with producing two from the Holy Scriptures. When Christ says to his disciples, "Abide "in me, and I in you;" the verb, *abide*, is necessarily understood in the second member of the proposition, thus: Abide in me, and I will abide in you. And when Paul says, "Though ye have ten thousand "instructers in Christ, yet not many fathers," for so it is literally in the original; we must also repeat, in the

second member of the proposition, what is expressed in the first, after this manner: Though ye have ten thousand instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers in Christ. This it is manifest, is the sense of the passage. So, in these words, "That they might know "thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou "hast sent;" we must repeat, in the latter part of the proposition, what is expressed in the former, thus: That they may know thee, the only true God, and that Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, is the true God with thee. For when it is said, in the second branch of the proposition, "AND Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;" it is natural to ask, What of him? To which the answer is, That they may know HIM ALSO to be that only true God.

Our opponents allege the following text, on this occasion; "Who is the blessed and only potentate, the "King of kings and Lord of lords: ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθα-"νασίαν, the only having immortality." But as these last words, when reduced to an ordinary construction, are thus read, "Who only hath immortality;" so our adversaries will have it that these τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, should be thus read, 'Who only is the true God.' But this text and criticism will be of little service to their cause. Nay, they could hardly have produced an instance more unfavourable to it. For it appears from the context, that JESUS CHRIST is the glorious person here intended. As, therefore, when he is called, "the "blessed and ONLY Potentate, the King of kings and "Lord of lords, who ONLY hath immortality;" the Father is not excluded from an interest in those august titles and the perfections signified by them: so, had the Father been called the *only* true God, it would not have followed, that the Son is excluded from being a Person in the Deity; seeing he bears the same sublime character, with other titles of equal grandeur.

But there is an obvious and essential difference between the two passages. In the example adduced, by Crellius,

" the only having immortality," is a nominative which does not depend on the verb, but the verb depends on the nominative; whereas, in the passage before us, " the " only true God," is an accusative, and depends on this verb, " that they may know;" an accusative, I say, which ought to be connected, not only with *thee*, but also with the following accusative, " Jesus Christ whom " thou hast sent." This, it is evident, entirely alters the case.—Besides, with what consistency could this author render the text, ' That they may know thee, ' who only art the true God;' after he had confessed, that the adverb *only*, does not relate merely to the pronoun *thee*, as has been observed?

Further: I demand of our opponents, how they would reduce this proposition; That they may know thee the true God, and Jesus Christ? Would they not, if ingenuous, reduce it thus; That they may know thee for the true God, thee, and Jesus Christ? When I form these propositions; That they may know thee, the only wise, and Jesus Christ—Thee, the only immortal, and Jesus Christ—Thee, the only king, and Jesus Christ—no one would ever suppose, that I intend to exclude the Lord Redeemer from wisdom, immortality, and royalty. On the contrary, every one would immediately see, that I comprehend, in these propositions, the wisdom, the immortality, and the royalty of the one and the other. Why, then, should any person form a different judgment of this proposition, which is perfectly similar; That they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ? For these words, " whom thou hast sent," do not in the least alter the nature of the proposition.

When our opponents express the proposition thus, That they may know thee, who art the only true God, —it is necessary to inquire, whether the term *only* is to be connected with the pronoun *thee*, or with the noun *God*. For if the word *only* be joined with *thee*, that is, the Father; it indicates, that the Father only is the true God: but, if it be connected with the term *God*,

it declares the Father to be that God, who is the only true one. To see which of these interpretations ought to be preferred, we need only to consult the original. For there, it is observable, the article does not stand immediately either before *God*, or *true God;* but before these three terms, *only true God.* If the original were, σὲ μόνον τὸν ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, the meaning would be, That they may know thee only, the true God. Which proposition might be reduced to this; That they may know thee, who only art the true God. But the pen of inspiration has recorded it thus; σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, "that they may know thee, the only true "God:" the signification of which is plainly this, That they may know that thou art the only true God. Now he who says, The Father is that God who is the only true one, asserts nothing inconsistent with our sentiments. For he who says, the Father is *God;* says also, the Father is the *only true* God. And so when we say, Jesus Christ is God, we assert, that He is the only true God; because we have no idea of two Gods. If, then, the Scripture do not militate against the Deity of Christ, in saying, that the Father *is God;* it asserts nothing inconsistent with that capital truth when it affirms, that the Father is the *only true God.*

But the sense of the passage will be more apparent, and its consistency with our doctrine more evident, if we consider, the occasion of the words—a parallel passage—that equality on which the Father and the Son are here placed—and the principal terms of which the remarkable text consists.—The *occasion* of the words. It was evidently in opposition to the corrupt theology of the Heathens, that Christ thus expressed himself. As if he had said; The Gentiles perish, because they have no knowledge of any but false gods: but it is life eternal to know thee the true God, in opposition to idols, and Jesus Christ thy Son. This is quite consistent with our hypothesis. For who does not perceive, that the words

of the text are limited by the occaſion of them? Crellius, indeed, ſays, 'The ſenſe of a diſcourſe is not always 'determined by the occaſion of it: and it frequently 'happens, that we deliver general expreſſions on a 'particular occaſion.'—That this is the caſe in *ſome* inſtances, we freely allow; but that it is *always* thus, our learned opponent dares not affirm. We have ſeveral examples of each kind, in the evangelical hiſtory. So when Chriſt ſays, immediately before he raiſed Lazarus from the dead; "I am the reſurrection and the life. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet "ſhall he live"—And when, upon his diſciples ſhewing him the temple, he ſaid, "Deſtroy this temple, "and in three days I will raiſe it up"—it is manifeſt that, on theſe particular occaſions, he delivers general expreſſions, which are not limited by the ſubjects of which he ſpeaks. But then this is not *always* the caſe. For example: When Jeſus ſaid to Peter, "Bleſſed art thou "Simon Barjona; for fleſh and blood hath not revealed "it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;" will Crellius affirm, that the expreſſions are not limited by the occaſion on which they were ſpoken? Will he aſſert, that by *it*, or *theſe things*, the good confeſſion which Peter had juſt made, is not to be underſtood?

It being certain, then, that the ſenſe of a period is ſometimes limited, and ſometimes not limited, by the occaſion of it; we muſt inquire, under which of theſe two claſſes the text in queſtion ſhould be placed. That the ſenſe of it ought to be limited to the occaſion of the words, is evident to me from this conſideration; There is a *double alluſion* in it. The firſt is in theſe words, "This is life eternal." The ſecond in theſe, "The "only true God." In the *latter* of theſe clauſes, Chriſt ſpeaks in alluſion to the falſe divinities of the Heathens. In the *former*, he makes eternal happineſs conſiſt, in the knowledge of the true God; in alluſion, and in oppoſition to the ſtate of Heathens; who were loſt, by having only falſe objects of worſhip, and by not knowing the true

God. A *single* alluſion to the occaſion on which the words were uttered, would have been ſufficient to limit their meaning to that occaſion; and if ſo, the paſſage muſt undoubtedly be underſtood, according to its *two-fold* alluſion, in which the force and ſpirit of it conſiſt. This double alluſion, therefore, limiting the ſenſe of the words, requires us to explain them thus: That they may know thee the only true God, in oppoſition to the falſe gods, who have betrayed the Heathens into a fatal error; for in the knowledge of Thee eternal life conſiſts.

'But, ſays our opponent, ſuppoſe any one ſhould 'imagine, that Peter, James, or John, is of the ſame 'eſſence with the eternal Father; might we not correct 'and confute him by this text?' And could the force of 'the paſſage be eluded by ſaying; The deſign of Chriſt 'was only to exclude the fictitious deities of the Hea-'thens?'—I reply; Peter is far from being in the ſame predicament with Jeſus Chriſt. He is not GOD; nor is he *called* God, and the true God, in the ſacred Scriptures; yet all this is affirmed of the Lord Redeemer, by the Holy Spirit: nay, as before obſerved, our adverſaries themſelves acknowledge him under theſe Divine characters. Peter is far from being inveſted with the names and attributes, the prerogatives and honours of God; but his Lord, as we have already proved, has them all aſcribed to him, by the pen of Inſpiration.—Again: The words were ſpoken of the Father and of Jeſus Chriſt; not of the Father and of Peter. Nor was it neceſſary that this paſſage ſhould be adapted to confute every wild and monſtrous opinion, that might be embraced on the ſublime ſubject of the Godhead. For if Peter, for inſtance, ſhould imagine that he is the Father, who, according to our opponents, is the true God, in contradiſtinction to the Son; I demand, whether they could convince him of his error and blaſphemy, by confronting him with this text? 'It is I, he 'would ſay, who am the Father; and the paſſage you 'produce aſſerts my eternal Divinity—repreſents me as

'the true God.'—But were Peter in the ſame circumſtances with Jeſus Chriſt; did we conſider him as having exiſted before the world began; as being the Creator of heaven and earth; as the Alpha and Omega, the Firſt and the Laſt—were he, by unerring writers, called GOD, the MIGHTY GOD, the GREAT GOD, the TRUE GOD, and GOD BLESSED FOR EVER; were he repreſented, as equal with the Father, and as one with the Father;—could we, in ſuch a caſe, reaſonably refuſe him the title of *true God*, while we admitted the Divine inſpiration of the Scriptures?

Our interpretation of this text will be further confirmed, if we compare it with the following *parallel paſſage*. "The ſon of God is come, and hath given us "an underſtanding that we may know Him that is true; "and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son "Jeſus Chriſt. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, AND "ETERNAL LIFE."—We ſhall not ſpend our time in refuting the criticiſms of ſome of our adverſaries, who have maintained that theſe words, "This is the true "God, and eternal life," ought not to be referred to Jeſus Chriſt, who is mentioned immediately before; but to God, who is ſpoken of in the preceding verſe. For nothing but an extreme deſire to defend their cauſe, at any rate, could induce them to aſſert any ſuch thing. Nothing can be more evident, than that He who is called "The true God, and eternal life," is the ſame who is called *true;* of whom it is ſaid, "We are "in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt." Socinus does not deny it. Nay, he not only allows, that Chriſt is here called, "The true God, and eternal "life;" but he alſo confeſſes, that theſe words are parallel to thoſe which are now in diſpute between us. 'I am eaſily induced to think, ſays he, as the ſenſe of 'this paſſage ſeems to be entirely the ſame with that of 'Chriſt himſelf, John xvii. 3. that this clauſe, "This is "the true God, and eternal life;" ought to be referred, 'not only to the Father, but alſo to Chriſt himſelf, as

'much as it can and ought to be referred.'—But here our subtile opposer falls into a contradiction. For if the two passages be not parallel, why does he say, that the sense of the one is the sense of the other? And if they be, how can he maintain, that one of them says, Jesus Christ *is* the true God, and that the other implies he is *not* worthy of any such character?

But it is of still greater importance to consider, that *equality* on which the Father and the Son are here placed. They are evidently represented, as being unitedly, as being equally, the *grand Object* of spiritual and saving knowledge. It is, indeed, pretended by our opponents, that it behoved Jesus to speak very modestly, when he was praying to his Father. Crellius observes, that it was by no means proper for Christ, on such an occasion, to say, That he was the only true God, with his Father. The reasons which he assigns are; 'Partly, because he is praying to his Father; 'and, therefore, ought to speak with the greatest 'modesty: and, partly, because he considers himself as 'the Father's messenger. For it is not to be supposed 'that he should, when praying to his Father, set 'himself on an equality with him; by assuming a title 'so great, that the Father has none superior. And, 'seeing he here considers himself as his Father's 'messenger, we must not suppose, that he attributes to 'himself the glory and majesty of Him who sent him, 'which consists in his being the only true God.'—But if Jesus be *not* the only true God with his Father, it is so far from being the *greatest* modesty in him not to call himself so, that there is no modesty in it at all. Extraordinary modesty, in a subject, a servant, to say, 'I am not the sovereign of the state!' Wonderful modesty, truly, which restrains a worm, an atom, from calling itself THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS; GOD BLESSED FOR EVER! Never was modesty more offended, nor the laws of decorum violated in a more outrageous manner, than by Jesus Christ on this occasion,

if he be a mere man, or a mere creature. I, therefore, may return Crellius his own words, and affirm; That neither *modeſty*, nor the character of *meſſenger*, would permit Jeſus Chriſt to aſſociate himſelf with the Father, as unitedly conſtituting an Object that is the happineſs of mankind, if he were a mere creature. Not *modeſty*: For if Jeſus be a mere creature, he is not, in compariſon with God, ſo much as a grain of ſand, to the firmament; as a glimmering taper, to the ſun; as the ſmalleſt worm, to the lord of the whole earth. Shall we ſay, then, that the firmament and a grain of ſand ſupport the world? That the ſun and a glimmering taper illuminate our terraqueous globe! That the lord of the earth and a worm cauſe great revolutions in ſtates?—Not the character of *meſſenger*: For in what empire was a dutiful ſervant ever known to name himſelf with his maſter, and to attribute every honour and act of royalty to himſelf and the ſovereign? Were a miniſter of ſtate to iſſue a proclamation informing the public, That all affairs relating to government muſt be tranſacted in the king's and his own name; were he to cauſe his name to be ſtamped, with his royal maſter's, on the coin, and to be inſcribed on public edifices; and were he to grant pardons in his own name, he would certainly be guilty of high-treaſon. How, then, dared Jeſus to aſſert, that life eternal conſiſts in the knowledge of God and of himſelf? How dared he to inſtitute an ordinance, and require it to be adminiſtered in this form of words; I baptize thee, "in the name of the Father, and of "the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt?" With what propriety, truth, or decency, could he ſay; "Ye "believe in God, believe alſo in Me?" Or how dare we ſay, 'I believe in God the Father almighty, and 'in Jeſus Chriſt?'

The principal *terms* of which this text conſiſts, furniſh us with a further proof, that the Lord Meſſiah is not excluded from the Godhead of the Father. Let us conſider the word *know*. By this term we muſt

either understand a merely speculative, or a practical knowledge. Not the *former;* because our adversaries themselves being judges, life eternal does not consist in such a knowledge. For Crellius says, 'It is false that 'eternal life consists, nor yet the means to obtain it, in 'knowing that the Father and his Son Jesus Christ are 'the only and true God. This cannot be, if taken 'according to the letter. Otherwise it would be 'sufficient, in order to obtain eternal happiness, to 'acknowledge the Father and the Son for the only true 'God. But if so, all that are of this opinion would 'obtain eternal life; though, at the same time, they 'might be guilty of such sins as exclude them from the 'kingdom of heaven, according to the express declara-'tions of Scripture. You will say, then, All this 'should be taken in an improper sense; in such a manner, 'that this knowledge may comprehend faith in Jesus 'Christ, a faith working by love, and all sorts of 'graces *.'—It must, therefore, be a *practical* knowledge. And if so, to know the true God, must include a reliance on him and love to him; adoration of him and obedience to his commands. To this our learned opponent agrees. Now, as the term *know*, is applied to the Son, as well as to the Father, in the text before us; it necessarily follows, that eternal life does not only consist in trusting, loving, adoring, and obeying God the Father; but also in paying the same honours, and in performing the same duties, to our Lord Jesus Christ. But if it be our happiness to know Jesus Christ, so as to believe in him and love him, so as to worship and obey him, he must be the true God; for it is not possible that a rational creature should owe these honours and duties to any other. None but the true God ought to be served and worshipped, in a religious way. "Thou shalt worship," says the supreme Lawgiver, commented upon by the Teacher come from God;—

* CRELL. *De Uno Deo Patre*, Sect. 1. p. 21.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM "ONLY shalt thou serve." None but the Divine Being, therefore, can deserve those honours, which are presented to the proper object of 'faith, and love, and all sorts 'of graces.'

Life eternal, is another expression which deserves our notice. None but an Infinite Being can render the life of a creature eternal. But Jesus is not an Infinite Being, if he be not the true God with his Father: consequently, on that supposition, he cannot give eternal life.—When the passage asserts, that the knowledge of God is eternal life, and that the knowledge of Christ is eternal life; either it means, that the knowledge of the latter is eternal life, in the same sense in which it is affirmed of the former, or in a different sense. If in *a different* sense, no expressions can be more ambiguous: they are equivocal, and adapted to lead us into a fatal error. If in *the same* sense, Christ must bestow eternal life on the subjects of that spiritual knowledge, for the same reason that the Father does to them that know him. But the Father gives life eternal, because he is the true God. So says the text; "This is life eternal, that they might "know thee the only true God." It follows, then, that our Immanuel bestows life eternal, only as he is the true God.—Again: Either the knowledge of Christ is life eternal, because that boundless blessedness *consists* in this knowledge; or because this knowledge is the *principle* of it. If the *former*, Jesus Christ must be the Supreme Good; for consummate felicity, or life eternal, is no other than the complete possession of the Supreme Good. If the *latter*, then I demand, Whether this knowledge be the source of eternal life; or only a mean to obtain it? If the *source* of it, the object of that most beneficial knowledge must be the true God: for it is only the knowledge of Him that humbles, comforts, and sanctifies us; that produces both holiness and happiness, which are the two grand constituents of that life which is eternal. If only as *a mean* to obtain everlasting felicity,

the language of the text, though ſeemingly ſtrong and big with ſenſe, was intended to expreſs very low and feeble ideas: for if ſo, there is very little excellence in the knowledge of Chriſt, which is not found in an acquaintance with other perſons and other things. Were this all, it might have been ſaid, with propriety; 'This 'is life eternal, to know the law—to know the Scrip-'tures. This is life eternal, for the Iſraelites to know 'Moſes;' and, at the commencement of the goſpel-diſpenſation, 'for the Jews and Gentiles to know the 'apoſtles.' For the knowledge of the apoſtles, as the meſſengers of God and ambaſſadors of Chriſt, was a mean of obtaining eternal happineſs: and the knowledge of Moſes, as the honoured ſervant of Jehovah, was a happy mean, by which the Iſraelites were brought to obey God and obtain everlaſting felicity. Or, if you will, the knowledge of Moſes, and of the apoſtles, being a mean of converting ſinners to God, was alſo a mean of bringing them to eternal life. Whether this mean was greater, or leſs, is not material to my preſent purpoſe; a mean it undoubtedly was, and the argument requires no more.—It muſt, notwithſtanding, be granted, that it would have been impious and blaſphemous to have ſpoken after this manner; 'This is life eternal to know 'Moſes—This is life eternal to know the apoſtles.' And it would be the height of impiety, to call Moſes and the apoſtles ETERNAL LIFE, as the Scripture calls Jeſus Chriſt: "This is the true God and eternal life."

Whoever conſiders this apoſtolic teſtimony will find, that the Holy Spirit very cloſely connects the ideas of "the true God," and "eternal life;" and that it was his deſign to inform us, that it is becauſe Jeſus Chriſt is the *former*, that he gives the *latter*. We may, therefore, ſafely conclude, that as he *beſtows* the one, he muſt *be* the other. For when he is called "eternal "life;" and when it is ſaid, that eternal life conſiſts in "knowing him;" the expreſſions do not merely ſignify, that he *promiſes* everlaſting felicity, or that he *beſtows*

it on his disciples; but that he is the *author* of it, and that it consists in the *enjoyment* of him. Moses *promised* the land of Canaan to the Israelites, and Joshua put them in *possession* of it; yet neither the one nor the other is called 'the land of Canaan;' because such a name, for such a reason, would be ridiculous. But Christ is called "eternal life," and that immense bliss is said to consist in "the knowledge of him;" to teach us, not only that he *promises* that infinite blessedness, nor only that he will certainly *bestow* it; but that he is the *source* of it, and that we need only to know him, in order to be both holy and happy for ever. Jesus, therefore, must be an Infinite Object; must be the true God. For if he were a mere creature it would be impious to suppose, that everlasting life is infallibly connected with the knowledge of him; that being the prerogative royal of the Great Supreme. As it is written, "This is life eternal, that "they might know thee the only true God—This is "the true God and eternal life."

Let us now consider the name, GOD. Our opponents labour to persuade us that the term *God* is not a proper name, but an appellative. For this purpose they have written whole treatises: nor need we wonder at it. For if it be certain, that the emphatical term is the proper name of the Supreme Being, they must be obliged to acknowledge Jesus as a truly Divine Person; because they allow, that he is frequently called GOD, even in such passages as are not supposed to be figurative. They, therefore, will have it, that the sublime name is an appellative; and that it is frequently given to others, besides the Great Supreme.—Without entering into this dispute, we shall reason with them on their own principles. If, then, the term *God* be an appellative, we may form the same judgment of it, as of the name *king*; which is given to Jehovah, by way of excellence, but is also attributed to others. Now I demand of our adversaries, supposing the words of the text were, 'This is life 'eternal, that they might know thee the only true *King*,

'and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' whether they would affirm that the expressions, 'only true King,' belong to the Father exclusively of the Son? or whether they would allow them to belong to both? They would, I am persuaded, understand the words thus; This is life eternal, to know thee the only true King; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ. Now, as the name *God*, on their principles, is no less appellative then the term *king*; they ought, if they would act consistently, to understand the words of our Lord thus: This is life eternal, that they might know thee to be the true God; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.

The adjective *true*, will furnish us with another argument. By the "*true* God," our opponents understand, the great God; God, by way of excellence; the Supreme Being. We allow, that the true God is the great God; and that the great God is the true God. But we maintain, that the idea of *true* God, and that of *Supreme* Being, are two ideas which represent the same Object in different lights. The *former*, opposes the infinite Object to all such as *falsely bear* the name, Gods. The *latter*, contrasts the same eternal and sovereign Object with every other being in the universe; for all creatures are necessarily and infinitely *inferior* to him. So that though the very same adorable Object is signified by these two Divine characters; yet, as they convey distinct ideas, they ought not to be confounded. This, however, our opponents constantly do, when they dispute against us from the text under consideration. It would not avail to say, The term *true* conveys the idea of excellence: as, when it is said, 'Constantine was a *true* emperor—Alexander was a *true* hero.' Meaning, the one had all the qualities which an emperor ought to have; and the other was a great hero. For though the adjective *true*, is sometimes used to indicate the *excellence* of the subject intended; yet it more frequently signifies the *reality* of it. As

when it is ſaid, 'Henry the fourth was the *true* king of 'France, when he fought againſt the league, after 'Henry the third's death.' That is, he was then *really* king; he did not *uſurp* the crown.—So, in the text before us, the expreſſions, "only true God," carrying in them a manifeſt alluſion to the multitude of Pagan divinities, who falſely bore the name of gods; the epithet *true*, muſt ſignify the *reality*, rather than the *excellence* of Him to whom it is applied.

But if ſo it is very eaſy to prove that the phraſe, "only true God," ſhould be referred to the Son, as as well as to the Father. For if the character, "true "God," ought to be confined to the Father; it muſt be, either becauſe it is *not repeated* in the ſecond member of the propoſition; or becauſe it is *too excellent* to belong to the Son. Not the *former;* for we have already proved, that the analogy of language, as well as the verb *know*, requires that it ſhould be underſtood. Nor is it the *latter;* becauſe it is intended to ſignify, a God that is *not fictitious;* one that *really exiſts*. And who can doubt, if Jeſus Chriſt *be* God, as our opponents themſelves acknowledge, that he is, in this ſenſe, *the true* God?—Further: As that God, who is oppoſed to idols, does not exiſt merely in the imagination of men, but really and truly; I demand, whether the epithet *true*, belong to Jeſus Chriſt, or not? If not, he is, by the confeſſion of our oppoſers, a falſe and imaginary god. If it does, he muſt be the only true God.

But, perhaps, the word *only*, connected with "true "God," may give the title an excellence, ſo as to render it peculiar to the Father. By no means. For as the term *only*, determines that of *true;* ſo the term *true*, limits that of *only*. As the adjective *true*, is oppoſed to *falſe;* ſo the adverb *only*, is oppoſed to *many*. "Only "true God," therefore, ſtands oppoſed to the multitude of falſe gods worſhipped by the Heathens.—Further: "Only true God," is not the epithet of the Father alone; but of the Father and the Son unitedly. As in

this paſſage; "Or I only, and Barnabas, have not we "power to forbear working?" Here, it is evident that the term *only*, which, in conſtruction, is the epithet of Paul; is, in the ſenſe of the words, the epithet of Paul and Barnabas conjointly.—Again: If the term *only* had been the epithet, not of God, as including both the Father and the Son, but of the *Father*; if the text had been thus read, That they might know the Father only to be the true God; yet it would have required ſome caution, not to overſtrain the ſenſe of the word *only*; which does not always expreſs the idea of excluſion, ſo much as it may ſeem to do. This appears by an unqueſtionable inſtance. For of whom does the Scripture ſpeak, when it ſays; "The bleſſed and ONLY "Potentate; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; "who ONLY hath immortality?" *We* ſay, it is of Jeſus Chriſt: but, for argument ſake, we will ſuppoſe ourſelves under a miſtake, in that reſpect. Whether our opponents attribute the epithet to the Father, or to the Son, is to us indifferent, as to our preſent purpoſe: for they will ſtill find, that the term *only*, which is here repeatedly uſed, does not limit ſo much as it ſeems to do. Can it be ſaid of the Father, to the excluſion of the Son, "That he "is the ONLY Potentate;" that "He ONLY hath "immortality?" No, doubtleſs; for both theſe qualities belong alſo to the Son. Can it be ſaid of the Son, to the excluſion of the Father, "He is the ONLY Poten-"tate; He ONLY hath immortality?" Certainly not; for both eternity and dominion belong to the Father. If, then, the word *only*, when applied to the Father, exclude other objects, but not the Son; and if, when applied to the Son, it exclude not the Father; it follows, that the ſame term, in the paſſage before us, if it had been applied directly to the Father, would not have warranted us to ſay, that the Son is excluded: eſpecially, as the Son is called GOD, and the TRUE GOD, as well as the Father.—Hence it appears that this paſſage, which our adverſaries produce againſt us with ſo much confidence, confirms our ſentiment.

CHAPTER IV.

An Objection from 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. answered.

A SIMILAR objection is raised, by our opponents, on the following text: "We know that an "idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none "other God but one. For though there be that are "called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; as there "be gods many, and lords many: but to us there is "but one God, the Father; of whom are all things, "and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom "are all things, and we by him."—On which passage Crellius forms this argument: 'What could be said 'more clearly to prove, that there is no God but the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Paul, explaining 'who this one God is, says, he is *the Father;* not the 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But there was no 'reason that he, when his design was to shew, who this 'one God is, should mention only the Father; if it be 'true, that this one God is not only the Father, but 'also the Son, and the Holy Ghost: because these two 'last Persons were as proper to shew who the one God 'is, as the person of the Father; and, consequently, 'should not have been passed over in silence.'

Here I shall make a few reflections, which may serve as so many general answers to this objection. And it may be observed, both in this passage and several others of a similar kind, that the names *Father*, and *God*, are not used to signify one single Person in the Deity; but that Infinite Essence which is common to all the Divine Persons. This is what theological writers mean, when they speak of the term *God*, being taken *ουσιωδῶς*, or essentially. God, then, that eternal, invisible, omnipotent, and infinite Being, who is neither the Father alone,

nor the Son alone, nor the Holy Spirit alone; but, who comprehends the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; is called *Father* in a large and general ſenſe, becauſe he is the firſt Cauſe, "of whom are all things, "and we in him." In this place he is called *Father*, in the ſame ſenſe as when it is ſaid, "Every good gift, "and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh "down from the Father of lights:" and again, "One "God and Father of all." In which paſſages the character, *Father*, is general; and ſignifies, that God is the firſt Cauſe of all things. A character this, like thoſe of Creator, Redeemer, Saviour; all which belong to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, becauſe they are applied to the eſſence which is common to the three Perſons.—Crellius, therefore, is under a miſtake when he ſuggeſts, that Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt are never, in the Scripture, called Father. For Jeſus Chriſt is expreſsly called, "the everlaſting Father." And as he made the world, and is the great firſt Cauſe, he may with propriety be called the Father of all things; for "all things were made by him, and without him was "not any thing made that was made."—Should it be ſaid, 'Though he is called "the everlaſting Father," 'yet not ſimply *the Father:*' I anſwer, Neither is God called ſimply, *the Father*, in the paſſage before us; but "the Father, *of whom are all things.*"

The character, *Father*, may be taken two ways; either, as ſtanding alone, or as connected with adjectives, which limit the ſignification of it. When *alone*, it ſignifies that Perſon in the Godhead, who is diſtinguiſhed from *the Son;* but in this text it is limitted. We muſt not ſay, "To us there is but one God, the "Father," and ſtop there; but we muſt add, "of "whom are all things." Had the apoſtle ſaid, There is but one God, *the firſt Cauſe*, of whom are all things; our opponents could have found nothing in the words, which they would have imagined to be in their favour. And though we could not find a ſimilar epithet given

to Jesus Christ, or to the Holy Spirit; this would not prevent our concluding, that He to whom Infallibility gives the names, and ascribes the works of God, is the first Cause, of whom are all things. Now it is plain, that "the *Father*, of whom are all things;" and, the *first Cause*, of whom are all things, are equivalent propositions. Consequently, our adversaries have no more advantage from the former, than they could have by the latter.

But though the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have all the same essence; yet they are revealed, in the work of Redemption, under very different views. The Father appoints, the Son executes, and the Holy Ghost applies. The Father, in a more particular manner, sustains the character of the offended Deity, and asserts the honours of Divine government: for which reason he is more frequently called GOD, than the other adorable Persons. The Son appears as mediator; holding the place of man, yet invested with the rights of the Godhead. And the Holy Ghost holds the place of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, supplying the absence of the latter. We need not wonder, therefore, that the name, GOD, which is common to all the Persons of the most holy and glorious Trinity, should be more frequently given to the Father, who sustains the Divine character in a very particular manner, in the wonderful œconomy of Redemption.

Again: The adjective *one*, which here limits the name, GOD, should not be understood in that rigour of signification which our adversaries urge. For though it utterly excludes the "gods many and lords many," that are here mentioned, from having any claim to the character of Deity; yet, without entirely departing from the analogy of faith, it cannot be understood as militating against the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Because he not only bears the names and titles of the true God; but is also represented, by the unerring Spirit, as possessing the attributes and performing the works, as

requiring the honours and receiving the adoration, which are peculiar to the Infinite Supreme. Such is the union between the Father and the Son, that, in respect of their essential glories, what is asserted of the One, is to be understood of the Other. Jesus does not only say, "I and the Father are one;" but also affirms, that, "he who honours the Son, honours the Father "also. And again he says, "All that the Father "hath, is mine.—He that hath seen Me, hath seen the "Father also."

Hence it follows, that when the Scripture ascribes any perfection to the Father alone, it does not mean to exclude the Son. This our opponents are obliged to acknowledge; and, in so doing, confess the weakness of their own objection. For when God is represented as the *only* Saviour, will they except our great Mediator? Or, when Christ is exhibited, in the gospel, as *the only* Saviour, there being no salvation in any other; will they exclude the Father? The Scripture asserts, that "God "only is wise;" that He only is good; but must we consider the term *only*, as excluding Jesus Christ from an interest in those perfections? And when it is said, "The things of God knoweth *οὐδεὶς*, no one, but the "Spirit of God;" must we from hence conclude, that the Father and the Son are ignorant of the things of God?

From these general reflections I come to my author. 'Paul, explaining who this one God is, 'says, he is '*the Father;* not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.' —This is a great mistake. For Paul neither explains who this one God is, nor does he say that he is the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Holy Spirit. He does not *explain* who this one God is; or, if it be called an explanation, it is an imperfect one, and only adapted to the matter in hand. It was not his business, in this place, to explain the nature of the Father of our Lord, and to shew what the Father had more excellent than the Son. His business was, to characterize that

God who is oppoſed to idols; and to aſſert his infinite ſuperiority over the deities of the Heathen, the angels of heaven, and the kings of the earth, who are ſometimes called *gods*. This being the apoſtle's deſign, he deſcribes God in ſuch a manner, as exalts him far above all other beings; and, well remembering what the prophet had ſaid of all fictitious divinities, "The gods "that have not made the heavens and the earth, even "they ſhall periſh from the earth, and from under theſe "heavens," he gives this oppoſite deſcription of the true God: "To us there is but one God, the Father, "of whom are all things, and we in him."

Our author proceeds. 'The apoſtle's deſign was, to 'explain who this one God is. But does he explain a 'thing well, who omits more particulars that are proper 'to illuſtrate it, than he expreſſes? and who, inſtead 'of mentioning *three* Perſons, ſpeaks only of *one*, as the 'apoſtle would do in this place, if the opinion of our 'adverſaries were true? Who, among them, deſigning 'to explain and to ſhew who this one God is, would 'mention only the Father, and ſay; There is but one 'God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? and would 'not rather ſay, There is but one God, the Father, Son, 'and Holy Ghoſt.'—I reply; The deſign of the inſpired writer was, not fully to explain who the one God is, but to make him known ſo far as his ſubject required; by giving him a character which exalts him infinitely above all created intelligences and fictitious gods; calling him "the Father, of whom are all "things." Nor is it neceſſary, every time we ſpeak of a thing, that we ſhould endeavour to *explain* it; much leſs, every time we deſcribe a thing by ſome epithet, that we ſhould explain it *fully*.—The ſame apoſtle declares, "I determined not to know any thing among "you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified." But ſhall we ſay, The diſcourſe is abſurd; becauſe the apoſtle, undertaking to deſcribe the way of ſalvation, omits more things than he expreſſes? for he does not mention God

the Father, nor the Holy Ghoſt, nor eternal life, nor many other objects which are propoſed to our faith, in the holy Scriptures.—When the Philippian Jailer inquired what he ſhould do to be ſaved; and was anſwered, by Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "and thou ſhalt be ſaved;" will our learned opponent ſay, that thoſe ambaſſadors of Chriſt ſpake impertinently on that occaſion? The Jailer deſired to know, how he might obtain ſalvation. A moſt important query, concerning the greateſt of all bleſſings. Their buſineſs was to anſwer the query; and it was equally neceſſary for them to be full and explicit, on ſuch an occaſion, as upon that before us. Yet theſe unerring guides did not direct the trembling queriſt, to believe in the Father, nor in the Holy Spirit, though it was neceſſary he ſhould do ſo; for he was to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Nor did they, ſo far as the hiſtory informs us, tell him to repent; though repentance was no leſs neceſſary than faith.—The Ethiopian eunuch profeſſes his faith in theſe words; "I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son "of God." But was this *the whole* of his faith? If not, can we ſay 'that he explained himſelf well, when he 'concealed more than he expreſſed?'—It is neither neceſſary, nor poſſible, to ſay every thing belonging to a ſubject, on all occaſions: and a man muſt be ignorant, both of Divine and human language, to imagine, that an explanation given of any thing by an adjective, ſhould be an exact definition of it, according to the rules of logic, and take in the whole extent of its object. Philoſophers, indeed, ſpeak thus; but people in common ſpeak in a different manner. True it is, ſince we began to diſpute on theſe important ſubjects, we chooſe to expreſs ourſelves with ſuch a caution as would be needleſs, if theſe queſtions had never been agitated: and, therefore, when ſpeaking of the Supreme Being, we frequently ſay, One God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But how often do we expreſs ourſelves

otherwiſe? On how many occaſions do we give thanks to God, as the author of our being and ſalvation, through Jeſus Chriſt the mediator? which is a way of ſpeaking ſimilar to that of the apoſtle, in the text before us.

'Who among them would fail to ſay, It is the Father, 'Son, and Holy Ghoſt? They muſt, indeed, ſo expreſs 'themſelves, if they would ſpeak agreeably to their own 'principles. Much more ought the apoſtle to have 'ſpoken after that manner, if he had been of their 'ſentiment; becauſe it was his duty to give no occaſion 'to the great and pernicious error, as they think it, of 'believing that God is *one*, as well in *Perſon*, as in 'eſſence; and that none but the Father of our Lord 'Jeſus Chriſt is God.'—It is not neceſſary, to ſpeak agreeably to our principles, that we ſhould always fully expreſs them. Though we are verily perſuaded of the myſtery of the Trinity, yet we may conſiſtently ſpeak of the Father, without mentioning the Son; and of the Son, without mentioning the Father; and of the Holy Spirit, without mentioning either the Father, or the Son. For there is no neceſſity that every thing we ſay concerning God, ſhould be attended with an explicit declaration of this grand myſtery.

Nor was it neceſſary that the apoſtle ſhould be ſo very apprehenſive of giving occaſion to an heretical opinion, by expreſſing himſelf as he does, in this paſſage. Such an inſinuation, however, comes with a very ill grace from the lips and pens of our opponents, and betrays their inadvertence to a great degree; for it may be retorted upon them with the utmoſt propriety and unanſwerable force. Was it proper for the apoſtles, was it their duty, to avoid giving occaſion to pernicious errors? Ought they not, then, to have forborn the uſe of ſuch language as tended, ſtrongly tended, to lead mankind into error and impiety, into blaſphemy and idolatry! Could they, without renouncing all concern for the ſalvation of man and the glory of God, apply to Jeſus the peculiar, eſſential, and incommunicable characters of

JEHOVAH? Could they, without affronting their Maker and laying a ſnare for immortal ſouls, apply to Chriſt, a mere creature, thoſe oracles which manifeſtly ſpeak only of the true God? Or could they, with a due regard to the honour of the Eternal Sovereign and the happineſs of their fellow-creatures, aſſert, that Chriſt is GOD; that "he is before all things, and that he created all things;" that he "is the Firſt and the Laſt; equal with God, "and one with the Father;" that before him every "knee ſhall bow," and that "all the angels are com-"manded to worſhip him?" Nay, in thoſe very paſſages which are produced againſt us, the apoſtles aſſociate Chriſt with the Father, as a performer of the ſame works and a partaker of the ſame glories. They aſſert, that life eternal conſiſts in the knowledge of Chriſt, no leſs than in that of the Father; and, in this text, where Jeſus is oppoſed to all falſe gods, it is ſaid, "To us there is but one GOD, the Father, of "WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE IN HIM; and one "LORD, Jeſus Chriſt, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, "AND WE BY HIM;" as if the Son were on a level with his Father. Could any thing be more arrogant and impious than this familiarity, with which Jeſus Chriſt treats the Infinite God, if it be true that he is a mere creature? for it muſt not be forgotten, that theſe, as well as other expreſſions of a ſimilar kind, were penned by his authority and his direction. What, ſhall the Holy Ghoſt confine his care to the ſalvation of our adverſaries, by avoiding every occaſion of betraying them into pernicious errors; while he takes little or no heed to preſerve us from blaſphemy and idolatry! But, whatever had become of us, as there is nothing ſo precious, nothing ſo great, as the incommunicable glories of the Godhead; it might have been expected, that the Holy Spirit would take particular care, in penning the New Teſtament, that no occaſion ſhould be given to Chriſtians to rob God of his honours, by giving them to a mere creature.

'From whence it appears, that what some of them 'answer is idle, when they suggest, that the apostle calls 'this one God, "the Father," by *attribution*, as they 'express it. For if so, he would not have instructed 'the vulgar Christians, but rather have led them 'into a pernicious error. For the people do not know 'in what this attribution consists; nay, many among 'the learned have never heard it so much as mentioned.' —The *term* attribution may, perhaps, be unknown to many; but the *thing* is well known, and it is that about which we are chiefly concerned. *Attribution* consists, in giving a name to one only, which belongs to others. For example: As the name, LORD, belongs to both the Father and the Son, when it is given to Christ only, it is called an attribution: and so, as the name, GOD, belongs to them both, it is an attribution to give it to the Father only. Those gracious characters, REDEEMER, and SAVIOUR, are common to the Father with Jesus Christ; when, therefore, it is affirmed of the latter, "There is none other name under heaven, given among "men, whereby we must be saved;" it is called an *attribution*, or an appropriation of a name, common to the Father and the Son, to the latter only.—Shall we say, that the Scripture knows nothing of a love of *appreciation*, and a love of *intention*, because these terms come from the schools and are not found in the Bible? The *names*, indeed, are not there; but the *ideas*, intended by them, are strongly expressed in that sacred Volume. The *former* consists, in loving God with all our hearts; the *latter*, in forsaking kindred, property, and life itself, at his command and for his glory.—So, in the case before us. Either, then, our opponent who makes the objection, meant only, that the *term* attribution is strange to vulgar Christians; or that the *thing*, represented by it, was equally unknown. If the term, we have nothing to object. If the thing, his mistake may be rectified by shewing, that in these words, "ONE "LORD, Jesus Christ," there is an attribution perfectly

similar to that which we find in these; "ONE GOD, "the Father."

'If the term GOD, be understood in this place, as 'peculiar to the Father; either it includes a particular 'excellency, and is taken for that Person who is the 'source of the other; or for the Father, without denot- 'ing any particular excellency. If the *former*, we have 'already shewed, that they who speak thus, either 'contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the 'Father only is the Supreme God; or else they say 'nothing to the purpose. If the *latter*, the apostle must 'have spoken impertinently. For the question was not, 'whether *the Father* is but one; but, whether *God* is but 'one; as appears from the preceding words.'—Here we retort upon Crellius. If the term Lord be taken in this place as peculiar to the Son; either it includes a particular excellency, and is taken for the Person who has an original authority; or for one possessed of dominion, without denoting any particular excellency. If the *former*, they who speak thus, either contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the Son is the Supreme Lord; or else they say nothing to the purpose. If the *latter*, the apostle must have spoken impertinently. For the question was not, whether *the Son* is but one; but whether *the Lord* is but one; as appears from the preceding words.

Our adversaries, if they can, may answer this objection: as for us, we are not concerned in it. For what is this argument but a mere sophism? The term GOD, by being appropriated to the Father, does not lose its natural signification. It still denotes that infinite excellence which distinguishes his essence, to whom it is applied, from all that are called gods, or lords, whether on earth, or in heaven. The FATHER, who is here opposed, not to the Son, nor to the Holy Ghost, for that was not the question; but, to false gods, to magistrates, and to angels, is represented as infinitely superior to "all that is called god." But what insurmountable

difficulty is there in all this? Is not Jesus also opposed, in this place, not to the Father, for that was not the question; but to all those that are called lords, whether on earth or in heaven?

CHAPTER V.

An Objection from Luke i. 35. answered.

ANOTHER objection, against the doctrine maintained, is formed by our adversaries on the following words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; "therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born "of thee, shall be called, THE SON OF GOD." From hence they infer, that the sublime title, SON OF GOD, is founded on the miraculous conception of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. Here they demand, how Christ could be so called, on account of his wonderful conception, by the power of the Highest, if he was the Son of God from eternity?

In answer to which I observe; That God, in this revelation of his will, accomodates his language to the capacities of the person to whom he makes known his gracious designs. Thus he had frequently done to the Jewish prophets. When he revealed to those holy men the calling of the Gentiles, it was often under such images as were borrowed from the ancient sanctuary, with which they were well acquainted. He informed them, that "an altar should be erected in the midst of "Egypt;" and that, from the rising to the setting sun "incense should be offered with a pure offering." Such ideas were familiar to them; and, therefore spiritual things and future events were revealed to the

prophets, and the church of old, under theſe images.—So the angel, who appears to Mary, ſpeaks in a ſimilar way. He might, if he had pleaſed, have deſcribed Jeſus Chriſt as the Mediator, who ſhould reconcile heaven and earth. He might have repreſented him to the virgin mother, as an univerſal Monarch, according to the oracle of Daniel; as a ſpiritual King, who ſhould reign over the hearts and conſciences of men; and as Lord of the univerſe, having all authority in heaven and in earth. Theſe things, however, he does not mention; becauſe it was expedient that ſhe ſhould be gradually led into the myſteries of the kingdom of God. He, therefore, ſpeaks of the re-eſtabliſhment of David's kingdom, which was at that time the object of the nation's hope, and moſt familiar to the mind of a Jew. "The Lord "God," ſays Gabriel, "ſhall give unto him the throne "of his father David; and he ſhall reign over the houſe "of Jacob for ever."—Now, as the eternal Sonſhip of Jeſus is one of the moſt ſublime and myſterious doctrines in the whole Book of God, we have no reaſon to be ſurpriſed if the heavenly meſſenger, in his converſe with Mary, did not intend, by any thing he ſaid of the Lord Meſſiah as the Son of God, to declare the *proper ground* of his Divine filiation; but only to inform her, in general, of his infinite dignity, and that his filial relation to the Father ſhould be atteſted in his miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

Again: The Scripture frequently makes uſe of ſuch words to expreſs an *event*, as ſeem to denote the *cauſe*. So the evangeliſt ſays, "Therefore they could not "believe, *becauſe* that Eſaias ſaid again—." Thus the expreſſions on which the objection is raiſed, ſeem to denote the cauſe for which Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be called, the Son of God; but they ſignify only the event. For the ſenſe of the paſſage is this; The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee; the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; and it ſhall come to paſs, that the Holy Thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the

Son of God. The particle *therefore*, is not to be conſidered as pointing out the reaſon why Jeſus ſhould bear the exalted title; but why he ſhould be *received* and *acknowledged* under it, by his people: who would infer, from his miraculous conception by the Holy Ghoſt, and his wonderful birth of a virgin, that he was the "Child born, the Son given," and the glorious IMMANUEL ſpoken of in ancient prophecy *.

But were we to underſtand the words in their literal ſenſe, they would not expreſs any thing really inconſiſtent with what we maintain. For the power of the Holy Spirit, by which the body of Jeſus was conceived in the womb, conferred upon him, as man, the unſpeakable honour of being called, THE SON OF GOD. This cannot be denied, in whatever ſenſe you underſtand the phraſe, "he ſhall be called," whether for, he ſhall *be*, or he ſhall be *denominated*. Certain it is, that the conception of Chriſt by the Holy Ghoſt, was the reaſon why that which was born of Mary is called the Son of God. For as the human nature of Jeſus is hypoſtatically united to the Divine; it partakes of this and other glorious titles which are given to the Meſſiah, in conſequence of his miraculous conception. The reaſon why the humanity of Chriſt is ſometimes, though in a figurative ſenſe, inveſted with ſuch titles and qualities as belong only to the eternal Son of God, or the uncreated Word; is, its *perſonal union* with the Word.

Admitting, however, that there were a real difficulty in the text; a difficulty intended, by the wiſdom of God, to exerciſe our humility and faith; yet our opponents would gain but little advantage by it: becauſe it is eaſily proved that the title, SON OF GOD, is eſtabliſhed on different foundations from that of his miraculous conception. He is frequently called, God's *beloved Son*; his *own Son*; his *only Son*; and his only *begotten Son*. We ought, conſequently, to inquire, not only into his

* Iſaiah vii. 14. and ix. 6.

general character *Son;* but alſo into thoſe ideas of *diſtinguiſhing excellence* which are annexed to it, by various remarkable epithets.

Our adverſaries being determined not to acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt as the Son of God, by eternal generation, endeavour to eſtabliſh the title on the following foundations. His conception by the Holy Ghoſt—His inveſtiture in the offices of prophet, prieſt, and king—His unction by the Holy Spirit—His reſurrection from the dead—And his exaltation, after his ſufferings. Of all which in their order.

In regard to the *firſt* ſuppoſed ground of the auguſt character, I would aſk; Whether the mere advantage of having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, be greater than that of being formed immediately by the power of God, in a ſtate of holineſs; as were the angels, and the ſouls of our firſt parents? For, to be formed by the Spirit of God, and by the power of God, is, on the principles of our opponents, the ſame thing. This, therefore, they muſt allow. Conſequently, though Jeſus might be called THE SON OF GOD, becauſe he was formed by the Divine Spirit; yet the title would be common to him with angels, whom God created by his own immediate power. He would then be the SON, but not the ONLY Son of God.

It may, perhaps, be ſaid; 'Jeſus might be called 'the Son of God, in diſtinction from angels, becauſe 'they have not a father, being created and unbegotten 'intelligences; which was the caſe of our firſt parents, 'and is true of the ſouls of men in general. But it was 'proper that Chriſt, being like other men, and having 'a mother, ſhould alſo have a father. Yet, not having 'had one as other men, the want of ordinary generation 'being ſupplied by the Holy Spirit; we need not wonder, 'either that he is called the Son of God, or that he is 'thus denominated in diſtinction from pure intelligences.' —This reply is weak. For the character SON, OWN SON, and ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, though ſuch a ſublime

title, is of no real dignity, according to this argument. Becauſe, upon this principle, the reaſon why Chriſt is called the ONLY SON OF GOD, rather than the firſt man, or any of the angels, is only this: They, having been formed immediately by Divine power, were not conceived in the womb, as he was to whom the character is appropriated and peculiar. But, give me leave to aſk, What excellence is imparted to a creature, produced immediately by Omnipotence, merely on account of having been *conceived in the womb?* The Scripture teaches us to conſider this title, THE ONLY SON OF GOD, as one that is very eminent and glorious; as one that diſtinguiſhes Jeſus Chriſt from all the angels, and proclaims his dominion over them. But it would be abſurd to imagine that *he* bears the exalted character rather than any of *them*, becauſe, though they were formed immediately by the power of God, in common with him; yet he had the *ſingular advantage* of being formed in the womb of a virgin. Nay, there is ſomething more noble, in being formed immediately by Divine power, without the intervention of either father or mother; than in being formed without a father, in the womb of a mother, by the Almighty. Becauſe the leſs ſecond cauſes intervene, in the production of a Divine work, the more immediate relation it has to God; and immediate production carries the *appearance* at leaſt of more excellence, than that which is mediate. So, the creation of man, for inſtance, was more perfect than his generation.—If, then, Jeſus deſerve to be called the Son of God, becauſe he was formed by Omnipotence, with the intervention of a mother; Adam, who was formed by the power of God, without father and without mother, deſerves a higher title: and the angels, who were formed in a more perfect manner than our firſt parent, becauſe not formed of any pre-exiſtent matter, muſt be worthy of a more glorious title than he.

Again: If the Sonſhip of Chriſt reſulted from his being conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, the Divine Spirit,

rather than the firſt Perſon in the ever-bleſſed Trinity, would be properly denominated the *Father* of our Lord; becauſe that effect, on which the filiation of Jeſus is ſuppoſed to depend, was more immediately produced by the former, than by the latter, of thoſe Divine Perſons. But this is evidently falſe; being contrary to the whole current of ſacred Scripture.—Further: Though the conception of Jeſus was truly miraculous and very wonderful, yet it extended only to his human nature. But the word of God does not repreſent the Sonſhip of Chriſt, as terminating in him as *man*. No; that infallible rule of our faith ſpeaks of it, as relating to his *Divine Perſon*. As man, he was the ſeed of the woman and the ſon of David, in contradiſtinction to his being the Son of God. Now it is evident, that his being the Son of God, cannot ariſe from that which conſtituted him the ſon of man; for the ſonſhips being ſo widely different, the foundations of them cannot be the ſame; cannot but be equally different, correſponding to the two natures united in his wonderful Perſon, as IMMANUEL. Agreeable to thoſe words; "Concerning "his Son Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord; who was made of "the ſeed of David, according to the fleſh—Whoſe are "the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the fleſh, "Chriſt came; who is over all God bleſſed for ever."

'But the conception of Chriſt, by the power of the 'Holy Ghoſt, is not the only foundation on which the 'title is eſtabliſhed.' If ſo, different reaſons of the glorious character muſt be ſought; and our opponents muſt diſclaim the advantage they pretend to have, from the text under conſideration. If they ſuppoſe the evangeliſt, in this paſſage, to point out the *only* foundation of the title, they contradict themſelves. But if they conſider the character as having *other* foundations, then this text cannot be ſuppoſed to exclude others; nor, conſequently, to oppoſe that of eternal generation.

The *ſecond* pretended ground of the ſublime title, is, The *inveſtiture* of Jeſus Chriſt in his mediatorial offices.

In proof of which they adduce the following text: "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God "came,—ſay ye of him whom the Father hath ſanctified "and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I "ſaid, I am the Son of God?" That He who was ſanctified and ſent is the Son of God, is an undoubted truth; but that his ſanctification and miſſion were the ground of his Sonſhip, is far from being proved by this paſſage. There is a wide and manifeſt difference, between a *claim of relation* to any one, and aſſigning *the ground* of that relation. Of the *former*, our Lord here ſpeaks; of the *latter*, he is entirely ſilent.—Again: Though princes and magiſtrates are called *gods*, in the ſacred Scripture, yet we do not read of any individual among them being called THE SON OF GOD; much leſs is any of them ſo denominated, in that emphatical and frequent uſe of the title, in which it is applied to our Immanuel. Beſides, if Jeſus Chriſt were the Son of God, either merely, or principally, on account of his mediatorial offices; he muſt have been much more ſo, after he entered on his public miniſtry, than he was before. But this cannot be ſuppoſed, with the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon. Dare our opponents affirm, that the Sonſhip of Jeſus commenced at his baptiſm, when the Father ſaid, "This is my "beloved Son?"

Again: If Jeſus be the Son of God, on account of his offices, he muſt be ſo, either by nature, or by adoption, or by a metaphor; for we know not, as yet, of any other way. Not by *nature*, on account of his *offices*; for that implies a contradiction. Nor by *adoption*; for how can his bearing an office be the cauſe of his adoption? But if it were, this would not diſtinguiſh him from his diſciples; who are all the children of God by adoption. Nor is He the Son of God by *a metaphor*. For, on ſuch a ſuppoſition, the Sonſhip of Chriſt is greatly inferior to that of believers. They are the ſons of God by adoption, and alſo by regeneration. Their ſonſhip, conſequently, is much ſuperior to a merely

metaphorical relation.—Once more: When we consider our Lord as invested with various offices, we view him as Mediator; but, as Mediator, he is the Father's servant, and is repeatedly so called. Whoever imagines, therefore, that Christ is the Son of God in virtue of his offices, confounds the distinct, the opposite ideas, of a *son* and a *servant*. To suppose that our Lord is the Son of God, by office, or on account of his mediatorial undertaking; and to assert that he is God, by office, are equally indefensible, and equally absurd: so that he who can demonstrate the *former*, has no reason to despair of proving the *latter*.

Some there are that cordially acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity, and are far from denying the proper Deity of Christ, who yet maintain, That his exalted character, Son of God, is œconomical, and founded in his mediation. But if so, it had its rise in a sovereign act of the Divine will; and, consequently, if infinite wisdom and absolute sovereignty had so determined, He who is called the *Father*, might have been the *Son*. Nay, on this hypothesis, had not man fallen, and had not grace provided a Mediator; neither the emphatical title, nor the sublime relation signified by it, would even have been known in the world, nor ever existed.

The *third* reason assigned by them, as the foundation of the exalted character, is, His *Divine unction*. But here they confounded the effect with its cause; the character, with the thing characterized. That God gave the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ, as man, is allowed: but he vouchsafed the Divine gift without measure, because he was his Son. This heavenly unction did not constitute, but supposed him to be, the Son of God.—The Holy Spirit, indeed, is granted to believers; to the children of God in general, as their common privilege. But the gift is not bestowed, the privilege is not enjoyed, *prior* to their adoption; no, both the one and the other are the blessed *fruits* of their filial relation to God. And so Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost,

becauſe he was the Son of God; not that he *might be* ſo. —Beſides, if he had been honoured with ſo illuſtrious a title as, THE SON OF GOD, only or principally, on account, of the gifts he received; yet he could not for that reaſon have been called God's ONLY Son: becauſe many others have received the gifts of the Spirit, though not to ſuch a degree. But why ſhould I here enlarge, ſeeing it is evident from the Scripture, that Chriſt was the Son of God prior to his inauguration, his baptiſm, his unction?

The *reſurrection* of Chriſt from the dead, is the *fourth* foundation on which our opponents endeavour to eſtabliſh the glorious title. But our Divine Redeemer was the Son of God, his own Son, and his only Son, before that illuſtrious event took place; as appears from a multitude of teſtimonies, which need not be recited. It is, indeed, ſaid, "He was declared to be the Son of God with "power—by the reſurrection from the dead:" but then the words evidently ſuppoſe, that he was the Son of God *before* his reſurrection. His triumphant reſurrection did not *conſtitute*, but *declare* him to be, the only begotten of the Father.—Beſides, admitting that he might, with propriety, be called THE SON OF GOD, becauſe he was raiſed from the dead; yet he could not be called his ONLY SON; for ſome have riſen, and millions ſhall riſe from the dead, as well as he.—Further: If Jeſus bear the auguſt character on this ground, it muſt be only in a way of analogy and by a metaphor; much in the ſame ſenſe as the angels, being created by Jehovah, are called the ſons of God. I ſaid, by *a metaphor*, or only in a way of *analogy*. For I cannot perceive that the reſurrection of a man from the dead, is any more like a generation, or gives a better claim to the ſublime title, than his creation. Yet there are very few who would not be offended to hear, that Chriſt is the Son of God only by *a metaphor*. For every one may eaſily ſee, that believers in common would be the ſons of God in a higher and nobler ſenſe than Chriſt himſelf, were that

the caſe; they being more properly the ſons of God by adoption, than he can be in a ſenſe that is merely figurative.—But, whatever be the real ground of the glorious character, it is manifeſt, that it muſt be ſomething *peculiar* to Jeſus Chriſt; ſomething in which none upon earth, nor any in heaven, beſides himſelf, has a ſhare; becauſe none but He, either is, or ought to be called, "the "ONLY begotten of the Father—the ONLY Son of God."

The *fifth* reaſon aſſigned for the exalted character, is, The *ſovereign exaltation* of Jeſus to the right hand of the Father, after his death and reſurrection. But I need not ſpend much time in refuting this conjecture; becauſe many of the arguments already advanced return upon this occaſion. I ſhall, therefore, only aſk, Was not Chriſt the Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son, *before* his exaltation? Muſt we never diſtinguiſh between his being a Son, and his entering on the actual poſſeſſion of his inheritance? Jeſus, the Mediator, I allow, entered on the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance, when he aſcended into heaven; but does it from hence follow, that he was not the Son of God before?—We may affirm, that God *anointed* his Son; that he *ſent* his Son, to be our prieſt, prophet, and king; that he *raiſed up*, and *highly exalted* his Son; becauſe the word of Inſpiration aſſures us of theſe things. Conſequently, inſtead of ſaying that Jeſus is the Son of God, becauſe he was anointed—was inveſted with various offices—was raiſed from the dead, and highly exalted; we ſhould rather ſay, He was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and inveſted with his mediatorial offices; became the firſt-fruits of them that ſleep, and was exalted after his reſurrection; becauſe he was the Son of God prior to theſe events. And if ſo, we muſt either conſider his conception by the Holy Ghoſt, as the only reaſon of the illuſtrious title, which we have already diſproved; or we muſt have recourſe to a more ancient generation *.

* Perfectly conformable to the reaſoning of our Author, in this Chapter, are the language and ſentiments of that ſenſible

But here, as through the whole subject, we must carefully distinguish the *modus* of our Lord's eternal Sonship from the Sonship itself The *latter* is revealed, as an object of faith, by the Spirit of infallibility; while the *former* lies concealed in impenetrable darkness. I shall not, therefore, attempt to *explain* the eternal generation of the Son of God. It is, I acknowledge, far above all our expressions and all our thoughts: nor do I wonder that all the comparisons which the wit of man can invent, in order to illustrate the subject, come vastly short of their designed end. But I have no need of such comparisons to satisfy my reason and conscience. For if I do not allow that there are many great and interesting realities which as to the modus of their existence, are absolutely incomprehensible by me, I am not capable of reasoning either in religion or nature. But if this be granted, the eternal Filiation of the Divine Son being to me incomprehensible, is far from affording a sufficient reason to question the reality of it. I ought rather to inquire, Whether I can, without impious arrogance, doubt of its truth, it being clearly revealed in the Bible.

By examining the Scripture I am fully convinced, that Christ existed *before* his conception in the womb of

and ingenious writer, Mr. JOHN M'LAURIN. 'If that name, 'GOD'S OWN, or proper SON, signified his being produced by 'God the Father, it would agree to all creatures If it signified 'only some imperfect likeness to the nature of the Father, it 'would agree to all living, especially all rational creatures. 'If it signified only the highest resemblance, or likeness 'to God, that any creature has, it might agree to many; 'since no mere creature can have so much of God, but another 'might be raised to have as much, or more. If it signified his 'being created immediately by the Father, whereas other beings 'are immediately created by the Son; all other rational creatures 'might have had the same relation to the Father, and would, 'however, have the same relation to Christ that he hath to God. 'The name of, GOD'S OWN SON, therefore, cannot agree to any 'mere creature.' *Sermons and Essays*, page 137. Edit. 2d.

the virgin; this we have proved in the preceding Sections —That, before his incarnation, he was THE SON OF GOD; this the Holy Ghoſt expreſsly aſſerts—That he is the Son of God, not by adoption, much leſs by a metaphor, but in a *proper* ſenſe; and hence he is called, "THE "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD"—That, as the Son of God, he poſſeſſed a glory with the Father *before the world began;* of this he himſelf aſſures us—That he is the *Creator* of all things, and *one* with the Father—That he is *equal* with God, and the *true* God; as appears from the foregoing pages. Conſequently, how incomprehenſible ſoever the *modus* of his Divine Filiation may be, I cannot, without rejecting the teſtimony of God, refuſe my aſſent to the *reality* of his ETERNAL SONSHIP.

CHAPTER VI.

Other Objections anſwered.

OUR opponents object, with confidence, all thoſe paſſages of Scripture which expreſs the idea of *dependence*, in Jeſus Chriſt, upon the Father. They, therefore, frequently confront us with thoſe texts which aſſert; That Chriſt "does nothing of himſelf;" that he does "thoſe works which the Father gave him to do;" that "the Son knoweth not the hour of the laſt judg-"ment;" that "the Father is greater than he;" and that "the Son ſhall deliver up the kingdom to the "Father," at the conſummation of all things.—On each of theſe, and on ſimilar paſſages, they argue againſt us. But as they make, in reality, but one difficulty, we ſhall conſider them altogether, and give them but one reply.

Here, then, it may be observed, That we frequently meet with such declarations in Scripture, as are, *in appearance*, directly opposite to these. There we behold our Lord acting according to his own will; acting with a sovereign authority; acting as absolutely independent. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt—I will, be thou "clean—Thy sins be forgiven thee." There also we are assured, that he is, "one with the Father and equal "with God; that He "knoweth all things, and of his "kingdom there shall be no end."—Now these passages, with many of a similar kind, *appear* contradictory to those on which our adversaries argue; but they are not, they cannot be so, in *reality:* because they were all indited by the same Spirit, who is not liable to error and contradiction. Consequently, of two hypotheses, that which makes them clash and renders them irreconcilable, must be false; and that which proves their consistency, bids fair to be true, and is abundantly preferable. The former, I am abundantly persuaded, is the character of the *Socinian*, the latter of *our* hypothesis.

By what medium, for instance, will the Socinians shew me, that Christ is *equal* with his Father, and yet *inferior* to him? For, according to them, he is inferior, infinitely inferior to the Father, *by nature*. Is he, then, equal to him by his *offices?* Impossible: the supposition is big with absurdity. For, in regard to his offices, he is evidently THE SERVANT of God; he is not, he cannot, therefore, be equal with him, on that account. For a common servant to say, 'I am equal to my 'master,' would be insolence; for a minister of state to assert it, would be a species of high-treason against his sovereign.

With what consistency can our opponents maintain that Christ knows *all things*, and yet is ignorant of the time fixed for one of the *greatest events* that ever did, or ever will take place in the universe? The distinction between nature and office, is of no use here. For *knowledge* is a property of nature: something, therefore,

belonging to the *nature* of Jeſus muſt be in queſtion. Will they ſay, 'When Peter declares that our Lord 'knows *all things*, that he does not ſpeak in *the general?*' But what is ſpeaking in the general, if not making uſe of general expreſſions? Beſides, Peter, from a general principle, draws a particular concluſion. "Lord thou "knoweſt *all things*, thou knoweſt that *I love thee.*" As if he had ſaid, Lord, I love thee; and thou muſt know that I love thee; for thou art not ignorant of any thing.—To ſuppoſe the apoſtle was under a miſtake, when he ſo expreſſed himſelf, has no ſhadow of reaſon. Becauſe if he was, he uttered blaſphemy, by attributing omniſcience to Jeſus Chriſt, which belongs only to God; and becauſe his holy and humble Maſter would not have rewarded blaſphemy by ſaying, "Feed my "ſheep."

How can they reconcile thoſe paſſages which inform us, that Chriſt does nothing of himſelf; that he prayed at the grave of Lazarus; and that the Father always hears him; with others which repreſent him, as working miracles by his own will and his own power? If he be a mere man, he depends on God for his exiſtence every moment, and was entirely beholden to the Great Sovereign for every exertion of power in the performance of his miraculous works. But if ſo, how came he to ſpeak with ſuch an air of Divine authority and of Divine power, "I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN?" Had Moſes, or Paul, expreſſed himſelf after this manner, he would, undoubtedly, have been guilty of blaſphemy. Nor can the diſtinction between office and nature, be of the leaſt ſervice on this occaſion.

Nor is their hypotheſis any better calculated to reconcile what the Scripture aſſerts about the perpetuity of our Lord's kingdom, with what it ſays concerning his *delivering of it up* to the Father. For as according to them, he does not reign by *nature*, but only in virtue of his *offices*; it does not appear how his kingdom can be eternal. Nay, it neceſſarily follows that it muſt

come to a period, if his offices do ſo.—The ſeeming contradictions, therefore, between the different paſſages, remain in all their force, as to any relief which can be afforded by their hypotheſis. If, then, we be able perfectly to reconcile theſe apparently jarring texts, they muſt allow that our ſentiments have a manifeſt and great advantage over theirs.

Though the diſtinction of *nature* and *office*, which is fundamental in their hypotheſis, be of no ſervice here; yet ours of *two diſtinct natures* in the Perſon of Chriſt, which is eſſential to the ſyſtem embraced by us, is calculated to anſwer the important end. Nothing more eaſy, nothing more natural, than to reconcile one Scripture with another, on the foundation of this diſtinction. For example: Jeſus Chriſt is man, and therefore inferior to the Father: He is God, and therefore equal with the Father. He is man, and therefore ignorant of ſome things: He is God, and therefore muſt be omniſcient. He is man, and therefore muſt be dependent on the Firſt Cauſe; he prays and is heard. He is God; to act, therefore, he need only to will; for by willing he commands, and by commanding he executes. "I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN." He is man, and therefore may receive a dominion, which is not natural to him: he may alſo receive it for a certain time; after which, he ſhall deliver up his delegated kingdom and dominion to the Father. He is God, and therefore has an everlaſting kingdom, a neceſſary dominion that ſhall never have an end.

Crellius will reply, 'This diſtinction of *two natures* 'in Chriſt, is a fiction.' But if ſo, the Scriptures are abſolutely irreconcilable. Beſides, if we ſearch the Volume of Inſpiration, we ſhall find this diſtinction ſtrongly marked and firmly laid. There it is affirmed, that "THE WORD," who created all things, "WAS "MADE FLESH;" and that "GOD was manifeſt IN "THE FLESH." Theſe aſſertions muſt imply, that the Divine nature was united to the human, in the wonderful

Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. The ſame fundamental truth is expreſſed in the name, "IMMANUEL; GOD WITH "US."

And if you examine the paſſages produced againſt us by our opponents, you may ſoon perceive, that this diſtinction of natures in our Mediator, is quite conſiſtent with their ſcope and deſign. For example: "If ye "loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto "the Father: for my Father is greater than I." It is *as man* that He leaves his diſciples; for, in other reſpects, he engages to continue with them to the end of the world: it is of himſelf as going away *ſpeedily*, that he ſpeaks the words; and, conſequently, he ſpeaks of himſelf as man, when he ſays, "My Father is greater "than I."—And as to thoſe ideas of *dependence* which he expreſſes in other places, the ſeveral paſſages may be eaſily explained, conſiſtently with the analogy of faith and the Divinity of our Lord, either by the diſtinction of *two natures*; or by the office of *Mediator*; or by that *relation* which ſubſiſts between the Father and the Son. But that peculiar mode of ſubſiſtence not being revealed in the Scripture, it would be preſumptuous folly in me to attempt an inquiry into it: and I again declare, that I will make no inquiries, on this myſterious profound ſubject, which are curious and philoſophical. FOR DIVINITY CONSISTS IN SPEAKING WITH THE SCRIPTURE, AND IN GOING NO FURTHER.

CHAPTER VII.

Some Conſiderations adapted to relieve the mind reſpecting the Difficulties which attend this Great Myſtery.

HAVING anſwered the principal objections, which our opponents advance againſt us, it is proper we ſhould now inquire; How we may ſatisfy our own minds, as to the difficulties attending the grand truth, which it has been the buſineſs of this Treatiſe to eſtabliſh? And, in order to this, the following conſiderations are preſented to the reader's notice.

Almoſt every thing in the ſyſtem of nature, notwithſtanding the great improvements in modern philoſophy, is attended with difficulties. If you look up to the heavens, you ſtand aſtoniſhed at their greatneſs, and feel yourſelf incapable of comprehending that immenſity which lies beyond thoſe vaſt ſpaces which ſurround us.—If you caſt your eyes on the earth, you meet with as many myſteries of nature, as there are animals, plants, and creatures inanimate. You meet with inſuperable difficulties in explaining, the ſenſation of one, the vegetation of another, and the motion of a third.—If you conſider material nature in its wide extremes, of immenſe greatneſs and inviſible minuteneſs, you are ſtruck with amazement and imagination is nonpluſſed.—If, to the conſideration of bodies, you take in that of their duration, time will ſhew you incomprehenſible wonders; both in the ſucceſſion of ages paſt, and in that which is future.—If you turn your thoughts to ſpiritual eſſences, every thing ſurpaſſes your comprehenſion. You cannot comprehend, either their manner of exiſting, or their manner of acting. Even the human ſoul is ſo great a paradox to itſelf, that it long ſince deſpaired, not only of comprehending, but of knowing itſelf.

And if so, is there any reason to assert, as our adversaries do, that there are *no mysteries* in religion? Or, have they sufficient ground to refuse their assent to the doctrine of our Lord's eternal Divinity, so clearly revealed in the Bible, because it is attended with such difficulties as are insuperable to the powers of reason? Is it any wonder if the difficulties with which we meet in the Christian religion, and especially those that regard the Deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, should be found greater, much greater, than those which attend a philosophical inquiry into the system of nature? It would, indeed, be a wonder if it were not so; because the constitution and capacities of our minds bear some proportion to natural objects, which are created and finite; and are much better qualified to inquire into their causes and properties, their connections and uses, than into those of religion, which are of a spiritual kind, and particularly what relates to the INFINITE GODHEAD.—Besides, the blessed God has not prepared our minds, in the Volume of Revelation, for meeting with mysteries in the frame of nature, as he has in the objects of religion. He has told us that the mystery of godliness IS GREAT, and that the things of the gospel are accounted FOOLISHNESS by the sons of science.

'But reason, they will say, reason is the principal light, 'and, in some respects, the principal revelation, by which 'God makes himself known to man. By reason we are 'led to the Scriptures; and by that noble faculty we 'are delivered from the blindness of universal scepticism.' —Reason, as before observed, prepares the way to faith, by leading us to receive the Scripture as a Divine Revelation; but when she has put the Sacred Volume into our hands, and has found the natural import of its language, she either is, or ought to be silent. She has no right to demand, How can these things be?—no right to dictate *what* the Almighty should reveal, or *how* he should speak. Nay, there is nothing more reasonable,

than to hearken to the voice of unerring Wisdom and Infinite Authority, with an *implicit* submission and an *unsuspecting* reliance.

There are two kinds of knowledge; one of curiosity, the other of practice: and this distinction takes place in all arts and sciences. Thus, for instance, in the art of navigation we must know, what a ship is; which seas are safe, and which dangerous; at what time such a sea is navigable, and when it is not so. This is essential to the end of navigation; and this I call, a knowledge of *practise*.—But it may be inquired, Why the sea is salt? What is the reason that such a sea has its flux and reflux more than another? And why such particular winds prevail more in this climate than they do in that? This I call, a knowledge of *curiosity:* and it would be very absurd to fail of reducing the other to practice, because these questions contain such difficulties as are unanswerable.—Again: I resolve to eat my common food, and, sometimes, when I have no appetite; because I know that without food my strength and life must fail. But were I to defer taking the necessary refreshment, till I knew how the various transmutations are performed; or till I was able to comprehend, how the food is turned into chyle; the chyle into blood; and the blood into flesh; all the world would laugh at my folly: while I should suffer the pains of hunger, perhaps, the agonies of death, notwithstanding any pretended importance of such inquiries.

In the affairs of morality and divinity, there are also two kinds of knowledge; the one of practice, the other of curiosity. To *worship* Jesus Christ, I must know that he is God. To put my *trust* in him, I must look upon him as God; because it is written, "Cursed be "the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his "arm, and whose heart departeth from JEHOVAH." But it is not necessary that I should know the *modus*, and the adorable secrets, of the hypostatical union. As to what is *practical*, it is this: To know that Christ is the

Son of God, whom all rational creatures are bound to love, obey, and adore—That He created the heavens and the earth, and by Him all things conſiſt—And that He is over all, God bleſſed for ever. But ſpeculative and metaphyſical inquiries into theſe things, belong to a knowledge of *curioſity;* and are no other than bold and preſumptuous endeavours, to penetrate the unſearchables of the Divine Eſſence and the Divine Perſonalities.

God's deſign, in that Revelation which he has given, is to make known *realities* and *facts*, not the *manner* of them. So, in the works of creation, he diſcovers himſelf as an almighty Being, whoſe power produced all things; but he does not anſwer a multitude of curious queſtions, deviſed by men of a ſpeculative turn relating to the *manner* in which Divine power produced the univerſe, and operates in the conſervation of all things — In the conſtitution of the world and the conduct of Providence, God gives us ſuch a diſplay of his perfections, as challenges our reverence and affection, our obedience and adoration: yet multitudes of inſuperable difficulties attend the divine Adminiſtration, from our not being able to comprehend *how* the holineſs, and wiſdom, and power of God concur in the permiſſion of the moſt wicked actions, and in over-ruling them ſo as to promote ſome valuable end.

And thus it is in the Divine word, which contains, as a doctrine, and reveals, as a fact, the incarnation of the Son of God. Theſe Divine declarations, "The "Word was made fleſh—God was manifeſt in the fleſh" —are plain and full to the point; eſpecially, if conſidered in connection with other infallible teſtimonies. But they do not, nor does the Bible at large, enable us to anſwer a number of difficult queſtions, which might be ſtarted about the *modus* of that wonderful fact. Nor, indeed, was this either neceſſary, or practicable. It was not *practicable*. For, as the minds of ſpeculative men are ever teeming with unprofitable queſtions and perplexing doubts, the volume of Scripture muſt have been

of an immenſe bulk, to have provided ſolutions for them all. It was not *neceſſary*. For to know the *modus* of the grand reality would, perhaps, only indulge our curioſity and flatter our pride; whereas our acquaintance with the *fact*, ſerves for practice; and it is practice, not the gratification of our curioſity, at which the Holy Spirit aims.—Happy would it be, if all teachers of divinity were careful to diſtinguiſh between thoſe things which are practical and neceſſary, and thoſe which are curious and merely ſpeculative. They would be ſurpriſed to find, by this diſtinction, that a great part of mankind ſpend their time in ſeeking a kind of knowledge, which is of little or no uſe—A kind of knowledge, which would neither meliorate their tempers, nor amend their conduct; neither increaſe their devotion to God, nor promote benevolence to man. They would ſee, that philoſophical divines loſe their way, the very firſt ſtep they take, in ſearching after the truths of ſalvation; becauſe they ſpend their time and pains, in attempting to graſp incomprehenſibles, inſtead of inſiſting upon what is plainly revealed.

As they who lived under the legal œconomy had, in compariſon with us, but faint repreſentations of the *reality* of the incarnation; though agreeable to the plan of Divine wiſdom, reſpecting the ſtate of the church at that time, and had regard to a clearer manifeſtation of that capital truth under the goſpel-diſpenſation; how do we know but our preſent ignorance of the *manner* of that myſterious fact, may have a relation to the future life? For the knowledge of the people of God does not only vary, according to the difference of the Divine œconomies, under which they live; but according to the different *ſtate* in which they are. A child, for inſtance, has no reaſon to be offended, or grieved, becauſe he cannot comprehend how the empires of this world are governed; any more than the ancient Iſraelites had, becauſe they were not favoured with all the light and grace of the Meſſiah's kingdom. The condition of men,

while on earth, like that of a child in the fimile, does not permit them to penetrate the myſteries of religion to that degree, of which the human mind ſhall be capable in a future ſtate; though even then it will be impoſſible to "find out the Almighty to perfection."

Our ideas proceed from three ſources, the ſenſes, reaſon, and faith; and theſe are mutually dependent, though their uſes and juriſdiction are different. The ſenſes furniſh reaſon with her materials, and reaſon furniſhes faith with her principles. The ſenſes never riſe ſo high as reaſon, nor is it proper that reaſon ſhould riſe ſo high as faith. Reaſon judges of that which the ſenſes cannot perceive. She tells us, for example, that there is matter between the earth and the heavens; though this matter does not appear. And ſo it is the province and prerogative of divine faith, to judge of thoſe things which ſurpaſs the powers of reaſon. God aſſerts and faith teaches, that "the Word was made "fleſh;" though reaſon, of herſelf, perceives nothing of it; nay, though ſhe ſtrongly object againſt it. And why? Becauſe faith is ſuperior to reaſon, as reaſon is ſuperior to the ſenſes. As, therefore, it would be vain and abſurd, for a man to endeavour to diſcover that by the ſenſes, which reaſon cannot develope; ſo it is prepoſterous and arrogant for reaſon to determine upon thoſe myſterious realities, which lie within the province of faith—even of that faith, which entirely depends on the Divine teſtimony, and is altogether directed by it. For as the errors of the ſenſes, which are the firſt means of knowledge, are corrected by reaſon; ſo the miſtakes of reaſon ſhould be rectified by faith. Let reaſon, then, lead me to faith, as my ſenſes lead me to reaſon; but let reaſon be ſilent when faith ſpeaks, as my ſenſes are ſilent when reaſon dictates. For, certainly, if reaſon convince me of many truths, contrary to what my ſenſes ſuggeſt; if it convince me, for inſtance, that the ſun is bigger than the earth, though my eyes teach me the contrary; faith may teach us a variety of important

things, which reason could never discover, and which, when discovered, she cannot comprehend.

Here, perhaps, it may be said, 'As the general 'agreement of men, in assenting to a proposition, is a 'strong presumptive proof of its truth; so a general 'reluctance to receive it, is an equal evidence of its 'falsehood. The doctrine of the incarnation, conse- 'quently, having something in it repugnant to the minds 'of men in general, ought to be rejected as void of 'truth.'—But there is a vast difference between rejecting a principle, as contradictory to some *known, established* truth; and finding it *naturally incomprehensible*. The *former* is a character of its falsehood; the *latter* of its sublimity.—There are some universal repugnancies of the senses, of the imagination, and of the mind itself, which do not conclude against the reality of their objects. For example: The *senses* tell those that view, from the ground, an Egyptian pyramid, that the summit of it is almost like the spire of a steeple; and though all mankind were to see it, in that situation, they would universally agree that it terminates in a point. But reason, judging of the distance and proportion of the object, as well as being assisted by experiment, corrects the error; and, notwithstanding this universal language of the senses, convinces you, that the top of the pyramid is a platform capable of holding fifty men.—Human *imagination* has an aversion, universally, to represent to itself men, who, without falling, have their feet diametrically opposite to ours. Yet reason corrects this error, and puts it beyond a doubt, that there are antipodes.—The *minds* of all mankind are naturally shocked, at which philosophers and geometricians assert, concerning the infinite divisibility of matter: and yet, on inquiry, we cannot but assent to the truth of the strange assertion, notwithstanding this universal repugnancy.—May we not, then, conclude, that though all men found something offensive to them in this proposition, "The Word was made flesh;" or, 'God was made man;' yet faith would have a right to

correct this univerſal repugnancy, as reaſon does that of the ſenſes and imagination?

Many learned and pious men have laboured hard to find out pertinent ſimilitudes, by which to illuſtrate a ſubject which is unſearchably deep and beyond all compariſon. Such attempts, however well-intended, cannot fail of proving abortive, and are often injurious to the cauſe they were deſigned to ſerve.—Theſe compariſons are not adapted to anſwer the end, as they ſpeak only to our imagination. Now it is not the *imagination*, but *reaſon* that muſt be ſatisfied. For as thoſe emblems, under which I may repreſent to myſelf the Divine Being, have but little evidence to convince me of his exiſtence; ſo the images, by which the myſtery before us may be repreſented, have but little force to perſuade me of its truth.—Beſides, theſe compariſons give occaſion to our opponents, to examine and expoſe the diſparities which attend them; which muſt neceſſarily be both numerous and ſtriking, by reaſon of the immenſe diſproportion which there is between ſimiliſtudes taken from finite creatures, and the infinite Creator. On theſe diſparities the enemies of the truth raiſe imaginary triumphs; and improve them to blind the ſimple and ſeduce the ignorant, who do not well underſtand the deſign of ſuch compariſons; which was, not the *conviction* of the mind, but the *aſſiſtance* of the imagination.—Another reaſon why theſe compariſons appear to us injurious to the cauſe of truth, is, their being intended to leſſen the difficulties attending the grand myſtery, by diſcovering the *manner* of it, which God has not revealed. This, ſo far as it is ſuppoſed to operate, ſuperſedes the neceſſity of an unreſerved confidence in the divine teſtimony, concerning this profoundly myſterious ſubject; and, in a meaſure, the end of Revelation itſelf: which is calculated to humble us, by preſenting us with objects which we cannot comprehend, as well as to enlighten us in ſuch things as are neceſſary to be known.

The only use I would make of such comparisons, is, to discover the difference between intuitive and abstracted knowledge. I call that *intuitive*, which arises from sight and experience; and that *abstracted*, which results from reasoning and testimony. For instance: A man, blind from his birth, has only an abstracted knowledge of many agreeable and wonderful objects around him, of which persons in common have an intuitive knowledge. Now, supposing you speak to such an one about light and colours; about the brightness of the sun, in his meridian glory, or concerning the vegetable beauties of spring; his ideas of what you mean are all confused. Nay, if you enter into particulars with him, on subjects of this kind, he will consider many things you say, as quite inconsistent one with another. He will not know how, and he will think it impossible for any other person, to reconcile so many apparent contradictions. Whereas if you mention the several particulars to one who enjoys the blessing of sight, and, especially, if he have been studious of nature; he understands what you say, and has not the least doubt in the case. The grand reason of this difference is, those things which are incomprehensible, when they are known merely with an abstracted knowledge, appear in a very different light when they are known intuitively; and, frequently, the difficulties we suppose to be in the *objects*, are in our *own minds*, and arise from our *manner* of knowing them.

Hence it appears, that difficulties and seeming contradictions may be found in the most common objects, when they are known merely in an abstracted way; and that the supposed inconsistencies vanish, so soon as they come to be viewed intuitively. We have, therefore, little reason to be surprised, if, when contemplating the mystery of the incarnation, difficulties occur and seeming contradictions appear; since in the present state, our knowledge of it is purely abstracted.

The two following reflections shall conclude this Treatise. As there are difficulties in almost every subject

of inquiry, it is by a *comparative view* that wise men have always been determined to take one side of a question, rather than the other. This is a certain rule of good sense, and should be followed in the case before us. We ought not to reject the doctrine of the incarnation as erroneous, because difficulties attend it; nor because very plausible objections have been made against it. It is the fault of young persons, and the character of rash and weak understandings, that are not capable of viewing several objects, and their relations, at once; to determine questions of importance, on the appearance of an insuperable difficulty: or else it is an evidence of a negligent and lazy temper, which will not permit them to examine things maturely. We ought here, as it is a question of infinite importance, to the glory of God and the salvation of men; to compare arguments with arguments, and difficulties with difficulties, and that with diligence and prayer.—On such an examination it will be found, that the most plausible *arguments* of our adversaries consist, either in metaphysical speculations; or in such passages of Scripture as explain themselves, by others, to a very different sense: whereas ours are formed on such Divine declarations as are clear and express, frequently repeated and closely connected; so that either the obvious and natural meaning of the terms must utterly be rejected, and then any expressions will serve any purpose; or our interpretation must be received. And as to the *difficulties* it will appear, that the most formidable of those which are started by our opponents, are taken, either from their being incapable of comprehending the mystery; or from the glosses of some whimsical schoolmen, which we freely give up and heartily despise, as much as our opposers themselves. But the difficulties which we improve against them, arise from a consideration of such things as are absolutely essential to the Scriptures; which are, *truth*, *perspicuity*, and *piety* For without these the Bible is unworthy of God: destitute of these, whoever attributes it to Him, reproaches his Maker. Difficulties multiply

and load their hypotheſis, by conſidering, the analogy of faith—that by which God's love to mankind is moſt highly recommended—that on which are founded the reality of the atonement by Jeſus Chriſt, and all the merit of his death—and, above all, that which the apoſtles, who were inſpired and commiſſioned to reveal and publiſh the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, have moſt ſaid, repeated, urged; and upon which they have grounded the practice of worſhipping Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, as OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. So that the difficulties which we object, are ſuch as affect THE BIBLE, as a Divine Revelation; and CHRISTIANITY, as a Divine Religion.

Again: Though the Socinian interpretation of controverted texts, is, in many inſtances, the moſt probable that can be given, in oppoſition to the arguments we form upon them, in defence of our Lord's Divinity; yet they appear unnatural, far-fetched, and invented merely to ſerve an hypotheſis. So that, as we are not required to interpret the oracles of God by a Spirit of divination, nor to decypher unſearchable riddles; we cannot be under any obligation to know, much leſs to approve, ſuch refined ſubtilties as are calculated to lower, to obſcure, to deſtroy, thoſe ſublime ideas which the Scriptures give us, of the eſſential and mediatorial glories of Jeſus Chriſt.

The former of theſe reflections proves the *truth* of our principles, the latter ſhews the *ſafety* of them. The one ſatisfies our *minds*, the other our *conſciences;* and both together give a juſt idea of the deſign of this Treatiſe, which I now dedicate to the eternal honour of my DIVINE REDEEMER, the ADORABLE IMMANUEL.—'Forgive, 'O GOD, the imperfections of the work, and the ſins 'of the author! Eſtabliſh and ſpread the infallible truths 'of thy goſpel; that as thou haſt been pleaſed to manifeſt 'thyſelf in the fleſh, all fleſh may behold thy glory and 'bow at thy footſtool! Amen.'

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Erratum. Page 83, line 4 from the bottom, for *creavit* read *Bara*.

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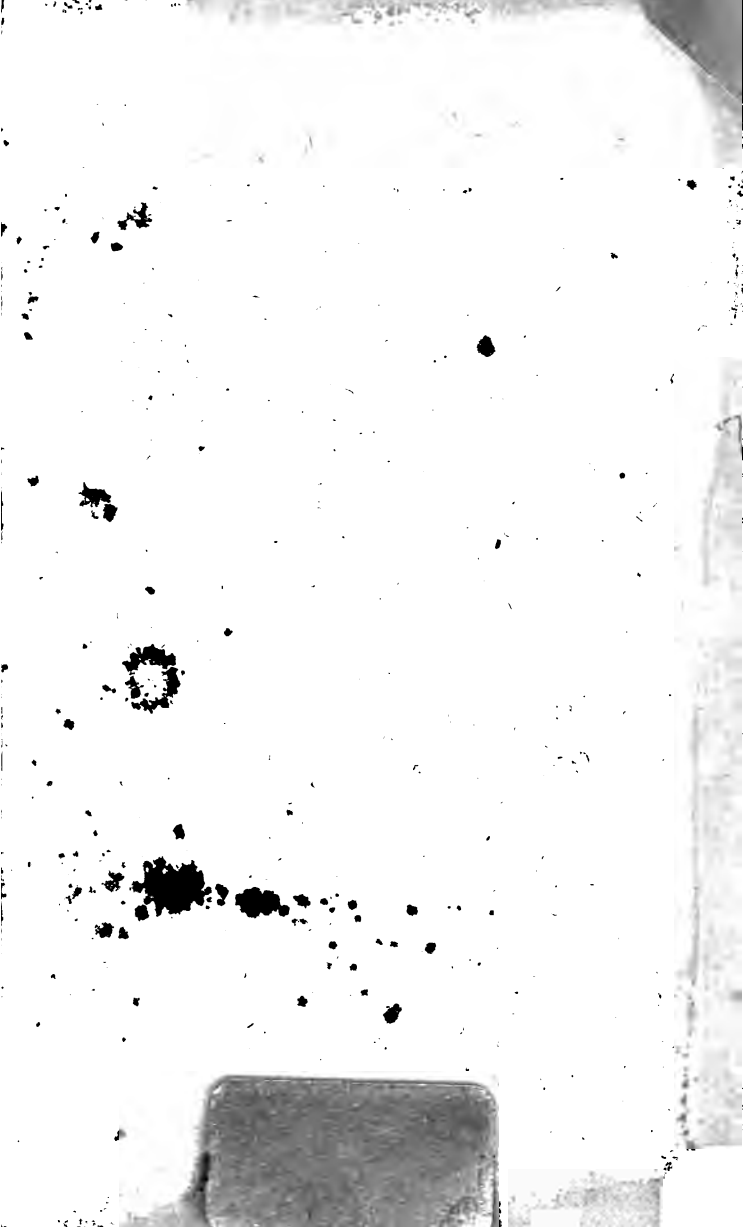
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